

IS IT A MAN'S WORLD? – GENDER AND LEADER ROLES IN MARITIME

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Abstract

Women still face obstacles in reaching leadership positions, despite the changes in attitudes towards equal opportunities. These obstacles are especially evident in the maritime field where only small percentage of the employees are women. This research studied the leader and gender roles in male-dominated field maritime in Finland using a framework based on the role congruity theory. In the framework, descriptive norms on what women are and do, and injunctive norms on what women should be and do, create the gender and leader roles. In the case of incongruence between these roles, women are not seen as leaders and when they reach leadership positions, they are judged on not adhering to the gender role. Research has shown that men don't connect women and feminine characteristics to successful leaders and even though women may receive higher job performance grades, they still receive fewer promotions. Women don't also emerge as leaders as often as men do. The leader and gender roles can be mitigated with factors related to the perceiver and the context.

In my research I interviewed eight women leaders in the field of maritime in Finland, and aimed to discover their experiences with regards to the gender and leader expectations they have faced in their careers. These women had several years of leadership experience from the field, now working office jobs, but three of them having experience from working onboard also. I used feminist research methodology to tell the experiences that these women have met with regards to stereotypes and leadership views in the maritime sector.

The leader role in the maritime sector is built on the operation of the ships; the management of things and operations in a context of high responsibility and stakes, building and agentic leader role, where decision-making is fast and orders are needed to be executed. The gender role in maritime is fairly masculine, as work on ships has been seen as work of men, as it has been tough and demanding, and women have faced the need to prove their worth in positions on board. The interviewees had faced, especially onboard, situations of prejudice, but in the office jobs these were less frequent. The women felt that it was nice to be a woman in the maritime field in Finland, and that in many ways it was easy to stand out in a good way.

In summary, women face obstacles based on gender stereotypes that could be eliminated to create more equality to male-dominated fields. However, in maritime there was also indication that in leadership positions the performance is valued more than gender once the leader had proven the capabilities. Women were able to gain advantage in their careers from combining communal and agentic leadership features, as the feminine characteristics were seen to bring a balancing feature to the masculine leadership in the maritime and there seemed to be a demand for also more communal leadership style. This combination of styles and emphasis on the communal side is also in line with the changing leadership style in business. It would seem that the gender role is thus changing onboard also, which would then reflect to positions at the office also. More women would be entering maritime professions, at the same time creating a more appealing environment for other women.

Keywords leadership, maritime, role congruity, female leadership, stereotypes



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Naiset kohtaavat edelleen esteitä pääsyssään johtotehtäviin huolimatta entistä tasa-arvoisemmista asenteista työelämässä. Nämä esteet ovat erityisen ilmeisiä merenkulun alalla, jossa vain pieni osa työntekijöistä on naisia. Tässä tutkimuksessa tutkittiin merenkulun johtaja- ja sukupuolirooleja Suomessa roolien sukupuoli- ja johtajarooleihin perustuvan viitekehyksen avulla. Sukupuoliroolit syntyvät normeista jotka kertovat mitä naiset ovat ja mitä naisten pitäisi olla. Jos sukupuoliroolin ja johtajaroolin välillä on ristiriitaa, naisia ei nähdä johtajina, ja kun he pääsevät johtotehtäviin, heitä arvostellaan rankemmin, jos he eivät täytä sukupuoliroolin vaatimuksia. Tutkimukset ovat osoittaneet, että miehet eivät yhdistä naisia ja feminiinisiä piirteitä menestyviin johtajiin ja vaikka naiset saattavatkin saada aikaiseksi parempia tuloksia, he saavat silti vähemmän ylennyksiä. Naiset eivät myöskään nouse esiin johtajina niin usein kuin miehet. Johtaja- ja sukupuolirooleja voidaan lieventää havaitsijaan ja kontekstiin liittyvien tekijöiden avulla.

Haastattelin tutkimuksessani kahdeksan merenkulkualan naisjohtajaa Suomessa ja pyrin selvittämään heidän kokemuksensa sukupuoli- ja johtajarooleista urallaan. Näillä naisilla oli usean vuoden kokemus johtajuudesta merenkulun alalla, ja he työskentelevät nyt toimistotyössä, mutta kolmella heistä on kokemusta myös työskentelystä laivalla. Käytin feminististä tutkimusmenetelmää jakaakseni ne kokemukset, jotka nämä naiset ovat kohdanneet liittyen stereotypioihin ja johtamiseen merenkulun piirissä.

Johtajan rooli merenkulussa perustuu alusten toimintaan; se on asioiden ja toimintojen johtamista, suuren vastuun ja suurten panosten maailmassa, kontekstissa jossa päätöksenteon täytyy olla nopeaa. Sukupuolirooli merenkulussa on melko maskuliininen, koska työtä laivoilla on pidetty erityisesti miesten työnä, koska se on ollut kovaa ja vaativaa. Naisten on myös pitänyt todistaa olevansa kykeneväisiä suoriutumaan näistä kovista olosuhteista. Tämän tutkimuksen haastateltavat olivat joutuneet kohtaamaan ennakkoluuloja itsestään, etenkin he jotka olivat olleet töissä laivalla, mutta toimistotöissä ennakkoluulot olivat harvinaisempia. Naisten mielestä oli mukavaa olla nainen merenkulkualalla Suomessa ja että heidän oli myös helpompi erottua joukosta hyvällä tavalla.

Yhteenvedona voidaan todeta, että naiset merenkulun piirissä kohtaavat sukupuolistereotypioihin perustuvia esteitä, jotka voitaisiin poistaa lisäämään tasa-arvoa miesvaltaisilla aloilla. Tutkimuksessa löytyi kuitenkin viitteitä siitä, että johtotehtävissä ihmisiä arvotetaan enemmän työn suorituksen kuin sukupuolen mukaan sen jälkeen, kun henkilö on ensin osoittanut kykynsä. Naisjohtajat pystyvät merenkulussa yhdistämään henkilö- ja asiajohtamisen toimintatapoja ja täten pienentämään johtaja- ja sukupuoliroolin eroa. Tämä tyylien yhdistelmä ja painotus henkilöjohtamiseen on myös linjassa nykyisten johtajuuden trendien kanssa. Johtajan roolin muutos myös merellä johtaa tilanteeseen, jossa naisten johtajuustyyli on enemmän tarvetta.

Avainsanat johtaminen, merenkulku, naisjohtajuus, stereotypiat

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In Helsinki, 14.11.2019,

Leena Vedenpää

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1 INTRODUCTION

Most research articles on women as leaders begin with an outlook on the number of women in top leadership positions in the Fortune 500 companies, or the wage-gap between men and women. Times may however be changing, as teenagers and adults have become more accepting of equal roles at workplace (Donnelly, Twenge, Clark, Shaikh, Beiler-May, Carter, 2016) and women do not value traditional femininity anymore (Donnelly & Twenge, 2017) however many fields have still a long way until equal opportunities for women. That is especially true in the field of maritime: a field in which superstitions used to claim that women onboard ships were bad luck. It has been estimated that only 2% of all seafarers in the world are women (IMHA, ITF, ISWAN, SHS, 2015) and that in managerial positions there are 7% of women, but with only 0.17% in executive leadership positions (Unctad, 2018).

It is not just that women have not reached top management positions, but they are not even seen as leaders. Multiple studies (e.g. Schein, 1973, 1975; Dodge, Gilroy & Fenze, 1995; Duehr & Bono, 2006; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell & Ristikari 2011) have shown that especially men do not connect women and feminine characteristics into successful leadership. Women might be graded higher on job performance, but they received fewer promotions (Roth, Purvis & Bobko, 2012). And even if women exhibit skills for leadership, they still do not emerge as leaders as often as men do (Walker & Aritz, 2015; Badura, Grijalva, Newman, Taiyi Yan & Jeon, 2018). These examples show that even if there have been steps into the direction of a more gender equal world, in business, there are still remnants of prejudice against women as leaders.

Successful women face double standards every day. The easiest examples can be chosen from politics: Finnish politician Jutta Urpilainen seemed to lose all her credibility after one appearance in fishnet stockings. Hillary Clinton was judged based on her demeanor and her pant suits. Former HP chief executive has reminisced how she was referred to in Silicon Valley as either a “bitch” or a “bimbo” (The Guardian, 2006). Only just recently, Nobel prize winner Esther Duflo was reduced in the media only to the status of “wife” of her co-recipient

Abhijut Banerjee (Swaddle, 2019). One should not forget the most notorious of cases of gender discrimination and double standards: The Ann Hopkins case that went all the way to the US Supreme Court. In this case Hopkins was turned down from a partner position in accounting firm based on for being too “macho” and needing a “course in the charm school”, even though she had more billable hours than anyone else up for the position (Heilman, 2012). In many cases women seem to be judged on everything else but their actual capabilities.

Women face a double bind when they rise to leadership positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002). As noted above, women are not seen as leaders, and in situations where they manage to reach leadership positions, they are more severely judged if they do not adhere to their gender expectations. In leadership positions women should be demanding and authoritative as leaders should be, yet caring and approachable as women should be (Zheng, Kark & Meister, 2018). Successful women can be also disliked and described with derogatory terms such as cold and selfish (Heilman, 2012). This all may boil down to the situation where women leaders are seen as either “bimbos” or “bitches”.

All these double standards and obstacles can lead to women facing opposition in their careers and not seeing leadership positions attractive. Women may face opposition in upward mobility, performance ratings and access to social networks (Heilman, 2012). However creating opportunities and especially creating equal opportunities would not be only beneficial for women, but incorporating women into especially male-dominated workplaces could have a benefit in creating a successful organization: having women in top management might influence positively to the financial performance of companies (Hoobler, Masterson, Nkomo & Michel, 2018; Dezsö & Ross, 2012). Having women in top management would bring benefits through diversity, enriching behaviors and motivating other women in the company (Dezsö & Ross, 2012). Also, preventing half of the population from reaching all positions would be poor human resources practice.

But like Rosabeth Moss Kanter, one of the leading researchers of women in organizations, (1993) says, the only possible way in which to break the circles of interlocked and mutually

reinforcing features in organizations, is to face those systems. And as Calás & Smircich (1999) point out, feminist theories do not only apply to women's issues, but can bring out issues that could go unnoticed and create theories that take into consideration all those who are affected by organizational processes and discourses. These are the reasons why I wanted to study female leadership.

1.1 Background and motivation for the thesis

As a woman myself, I have only in the recent years started to pay more attention to the thoughts of prejudice or assumptions that women face in working and private life. I have worked for years in a male-dominated field, and the last years as a manager. One of my closest colleagues, my superior in a project, told me that I should be tougher to other people, and not to display my feelings at the workplace, essentially telling me to be more like himself, like a man. Recently in job interviews, I have felt that I need to prove my technical knowledge multiple times despite my degree in engineering and over ten years of work experience on the field. Women have to fight against prejudice and over 72% of female executives saw that stereotypical views on what are women's roles and abilities as a hindrance for women's advancement (Wellington, Kropf, Gerkovich, 2003). This led me to think, why does it seem to be harder for women to reach positions of top management and why does it seem to be hard to be successful?

Acker (1990) lists reasons on why there is a need for more systematic work on gender and organizations: gender segregation of work, income and status inequality created by organizational processes, disseminated cultural images of gender, masculinity being a product of organizational processes and the feministic goal of creating more democratic organizations. There are, as already stated, many gendered assumptions in business. Most of the issues are defined through their maleness or femaleness (think manager, think male) in the quantitative scale, like the glass ceiling, without criticizing the social and societal aspects personhood.

Many of my personal experiences seemed to rise from the notion of assumptions and stereotypes about women. People are easy to generalize different groups and find

commonalities amongst them. We all have models in our heads that tell us what women, men or Swedish people are like (nurturing, strong and bad in decision-making), as stereotypes automatically activate in the presence of a member of the stereotyped group (Devine, 1989). Stereotypes can change our actions towards other, even if the persons do not fit the features of the stereotypes (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). In this research, I wanted to see how these stereotypes may guide our thoughts and prejudices against female leaders.

Obviously, there are several models and explanations on the obstacles of women in reaching leadership positions. Ideas range from lack of qualified women, women's family responsibilities, to women's inherited tendencies to be less like leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002). But since I wanted to study the effect of stereotypes and prejudice, I will use the role congruity model by Eagly and Karau (2002) in this research. Alice Eagly has done a long career in researching female leadership, and hers and Karau's model unifies the two sorts of prejudice that women meet in reaching leadership positions: women not being seen as leaders, and women being judged if they do not fit into the stereotypical gender role.

Through these prejudices, there are less favorable attitudes towards female leaders, it is harder for women to reach leadership positions and it is harder for women to get recognition for effectiveness (Eagly and Karau, 2002). In the literature review I will post some evidence in support of this theory, and in my empirical part I will present the stories of eight women leaders in the field of maritime and how their experiences fit this theory. I will conduct my research with the feminist research methodology standpoint, aiming to tell stories of women in executive positions, letting their voice be heard, and perhaps bring about something to create social change and empowerment.

I was also inspired for this research through my own experiences in an organization called Wista Finland. I now serve as the president of the organization, after being seven years as a member. Wista Finland is the Finnish chapter of Wista International (Women's International Shipping and Trading Association), a world-wide organization for women (and a few men) in managerial positions in the field of maritime and logistics, offering their members networking and promoting women in the maritime. Wista International has over 3000

members all around the world, and Wista Finland currently has around 150 members. Through this organization I have been privy to meet several successful women from maritime with fascinating stories, and for this research I wanted to hear more from them. The maritime industry created a perfect context for this research, as it is a very male-dominated field with traditions reaching hundreds of years, and as I presented in the beginning of this chapter, it is a very male-dominated field where only few women have reached the top management positions.

In 2019 the International Maritime Organization IMO chose “Empowering Women in the Maritime Community” as their World Maritime Day theme. The idea of the theme was to highlight the importance of women in the maritime sector and the importance of gender equality (International Maritime Organisation IMO, 2019). IMO has been working with their gender program since the 1980’s through creating institutional frameworks in order to promote the access of women to maritime positions. Their work is related to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, especially the Sustainable Development Goal 5 of achieving gender equality and empowering all women.

All this portrays how the male-dominated field of maritime has started to promote especially the desirability of the maritime professions for women. Women are reaching more prominent positions in the maritime sector. For example Captain Wendy Williams became the first Canadian female captain to be at the helm of a major cruise ship (Virgin Voyages, 2019) and Belinda Bennett became the first black female captain at the helm of a cruise ship (Forbes, 2019). But there is still a long way in the field for equal opportunities, as some examples might portray. In India, just this year guidelines have been issued that take into consideration women in maritime jobs. According to the article, some shipping companies do not hire women, stating that it might give them problems (The Hindu Businessline, 2019). And in another story, the first female ship officer in Seychelles in 2019 is enough to reach the news (Seychelles News Agency, 2019). All these stories and experiences make this choice for the context especially interesting as they are at the same time portraying an industry where women face severe obstacles, and slowly make their way into prominent positions.

1.2 Research gap and research questions

Organizational research on women in managerial positions and gender stereotypes has been done since the 1970s, but a lot of this work has been concentrating on using quantitative research to compare the differences between men and women (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). A lot of research has been made on female leader stereotypes (e.g. Schein, 1973, Duehr & Bono, 2006, Crites, Dickson & Lorenz 2015), and the actual leadership styles of women (eg. Eagly & Cali, 2003, Hoobler, et al., 2018). Virginia Schein started in the 1970's with her studies (1973, 1975) that studied the perception of a successful manager, and how those characteristics relate to men and women (masculine characteristics were more related to successful managers, creating the think manager- think male paradigm). Her studies have been replicated several times in the later years, confirming the existence of stereotyping men and leaders together. Alice Eagly has studied the social role and the role congruity of women and leaders (e.g. Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly, 2007). These and other studies in the field have covered many types of situations from laboratory experiments to field studies. These studies have created a good theoretical base in which to build my study, so even though a lot has been researched, there is room for more of qualitative research that doesn't only tell us that there might be obstacles, but rather tells how women perceive them and how they have coped. In this research I rather want to bring out the stories and experiences of these women in the ways they relate to being a women and a leader in a male-dominated field.

On the other hand, leadership in maritime organizations has not been that well documented. Even though a fascinating field due to its leadership context, surprisingly it has not attracted that many prominent researchers. There is limited amount of research made on the leadership at sea, even though the role of the captain is an important one. Theotokas, Lagoudis and Kotsiopoulos (2014) had researched the leadership profiling onboard, Johnsen et al, (2012) the emotional intelligence among top officers, and Fjarli, Overgård and Westerberg (2015) the thoughts of maritime students on good leadership. Maritime is also an interesting field of study due to its male-dominated environment, where only few women have reached leadership positions as presented in the first chapter. This creates a challenging context

especially for female leaders, where leadership can be very different to the “normal” office work as it might demand for a more commanding style of leadership (Grint, 2005) creating a clear contrast to the stereotypical female leadership. I did some research, and whilst there had been some studies about women in maritime, they were mainly about women’s experiences onboard, and not so much about women leaders on land. There has been research in the maritime on gender differences in self-assessment of leadership skills (Ortega, Overgård & Henden, 2015), women seafarers’ identity management (Kitada, 2013), women’s place in the maritime world (Popescu & Varsami, 2010). Combining this context to the well-documented field of female leadership research, I was able to find myself an appropriate research gap.

I have chosen to use to base my research into a framework that links to the role congruity theory by Eagly and Karau (2002). In this framework, as I discussed earlier, the incongruence of the gender role and the leader role leads to the double bind situation for women leaders. In this study I wanted to find out how these roles are seen in the maritime field, and how they have perhaps affected the careers of the women leaders in that field. I formulated my research question and its sub-questions based on my choice of theory framework:

- **How do the requirements of gender and leader role relate to the experiences of women leaders in the male-dominated field of maritime in Finland?**
 - **How are the gender and leader roles perceived in the maritime?**
 - **How do these roles might affect the equality of women in top management positions in the maritime?**

I aim to answer these questions through building the theory framework in the literature review and then conducting an empirical qualitative study with interviews of women leaders in the maritime field in Finland.

I try to focus in this research mainly on the role of prejudice in the leadership paths of the women and will not look deeper into other factors that might affect the advancement or career paths of women in a male-dominated field. I have narrowed this research to consider mainly the experiences of female leaders at shore at the office, but I will provide context that is

related to the position of women and leadership at the ships as it can be hypothesized that this behavior will transfer to the experiences at the office. I will do the study in a qualitative way, using interviews, and despite this method providing a rich dataset for my research, it is in its style offers a more subjective view of the leadership styles of the women, than for example handling survey data from objective measures. I also limit my context only to Finland, just for better access for the interviews. Other limitations on my selection of the interviewees is presented in the methodology chapter.

In this chapter, the introduction, I have discussed the background and motivation for my thesis, and also presented the research gap and question. In the next chapter, literature review, I will present my theoretical framework and the role congruity theory that it is based on. In chapter 3, I discuss my methodology, with my research methodology choices and the setting for my empirical research. Chapter 4 contains the results and discussion of my interviews. In the final chapter 5, I shall provide the reader with my own conclusions regarding the thesis and some suggestions for further research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, I will go through relevant research regarding my research. I will base my theory building on the role congruity theory by Eagly and Karau (2002). I begin my review with presenting the role congruity theory and discussing stereotypes to build the basis. Then I will present evidence on the think manager- think male-paradigm, and delve deeper into mitigating factors of the role congruity theory. Following this, I will present the context of my research, the maritime field and through all this build my theoretical framework for the empirical part.

2.1 Role congruity theory

Eagly and Karau's (2002) role congruity theory will be the basis for my theory building. This theory posits that female leaders are posed with a double bind situation in which women are faced with two prejudices: a) women are not seen as leaders and b) women in leader positions are seen as less effective, as the female gender role does not fit that of a leader role. Eagly and Karau build this theory through the examination of prejudice towards women and female leaders and on the basis of "social psychologists' tradition of studying prejudice and stereotyping, and industrial-organizational psychologists' tradition of studying perceptions of managerial roles" (p.573). The role congruity theory is well acknowledged in the research of gender and leadership, but it has also been criticized on its somewhat limited scope (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick & Phelan, 2012), but in general it and its similar types of frameworks are accepted as valid explanations for gendered expectations at the work place.

The basis of the role congruity theory is the construct of gender role. Eagly and Karau (2002, p. 574) define gender roles as "consensual beliefs about the attributes of women and men". Gender roles may arise from observed behavior of men and women, and the corresponding dispositions (Eagly & Wood, 2011), from descriptive and injunctive norms. Descriptive norms, or what can also be described as stereotypes, are the expectations on actions of a member of a group are and do. These descriptive norms can especially be activated when appropriate behaviour is unclear in social situations (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Injunctive norms on the other hand relate to the expectations of what these members of a particular

group should ideally do. Injunctive norms can be said to “characterize the perception of what most people approve or disapprove” (Cialdini & Trost, 1998, p. 157).

The descriptive norms regarding gender stereotypes are usually related to communal and agentic attributes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). It has been also researched that descriptive gender stereotypes can be similar across culture and context (Heilman, 2012). In the following table, I will list some of the characteristics often attributed to communal and agentic behavior:

Table 1 The communal and agentic behavior characteristics (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2012)

Communal characteristics:	Agentic characteristics:
Affectionate	Aggressive
Sensitive	Controlling
Helpful	Confident
Obedient	Analytical
Respectful	Logical
Kind	Independent
Sympathetic	Ambitious
Nurturant	Dominant
Gentle	Assertive

For most of us reading that list of characteristics, we most likely associated the first column with feminine and the second column with masculine behavior. Through activation of people’s stereotypes, they will see women being more communal and men as more agentic (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Gender roles also relate in terms of injunctive norms to agentic and communal behavior: research has been done on the beliefs on ideal men and women, ideal self-prescription and beliefs about roles and responsibilities of men and women, and these are usually based on the agentic-communal scale (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Leader role is then how we see leaders should behave and be, and in many situations the leader role is defined in very masculine terms (e.g. Schein, 1973, 1975; Dodge, Gilroy &

Fenzel, 1995; Duehr & Bono, 2006; Koenig, 2011), creating the think manager- think male paradigm. In the situation where a woman should be seen as a leader, people mix the information they possess regarding what women should be (the gender role) and what leaders should be (the leader role), and in most cases these would then clash. (Eagly & Karau, 2002)

In the case of clashing expectations, according to the role congruity theory, these people that don't fill gender and leader congruent beliefs, are judged more severely (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Meaning that a woman in a leadership position is judged based on being a woman in a role non-congruent position (a leader) since women are associated with communal characteristics that do not fit the expectation of an agentic leader. These conflicting aspects make it harder for women to reach leader roles, and if they reach these positions, their behavior may be criticized if it doesn't suit the preconceptions (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell & Ristikari, 2011). The perception of the leadership masculinity affects not only the prejudices, but the women also face issues through decreased performance and personal identification with leadership (Koenig et al., 2011). For example in a situation of a female leader in a solo status in an all-male group, lower self-appraisal and poorer leadership performance was observed (Hoyt, Johnson & Skinnell, 2010). Next I will address the question on how and why these stereotypical assumptions rise with people.

2.1.1 Descriptive norms, i.e. stereotypes

Descriptive and injunctive norms build the basis of the role congruity theory. As the role and activation of stereotypes is important to understand, I will first go through stereotypes in more detail. Stereotypes can be described in various ways: they can be said to be beliefs and theories on the characteristics and behaviors and how these might go together with some other (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996). They can be a shared mix of beliefs about a social categories of people (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995), like for example racial groups, genders or political groups. Stereotypes are known to change with time, and thus can be seen to live based on the existing reality (Bordalo, Coffman, Gennaioli & Shleifer, 2016).

Stereotypes have been seen as manifestations of statistical discrimination, generalizations of incorrect and demeaning traits or as cases of cognitive schemas and theories (Bordalo et al.,

2016). Stereotypes may guide our judgement and action towards others as if they were adhering to the features of the stereotype (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). This association can result to creation of prejudice towards others. In the social cognition approach, there is a clear role for the existence of social stereotypes as they can be used to interpret the existing world routinely, saving cognitive resources (Bordalo et al., 2016). We can build models of things and people in our heads that help us to assess situations more effectively. Stereotypes can be based on somewhat accurate assumptions, but most often they are great generalizations and exaggerations based on a “kernel-of-truth” and the most distinctive feature, and display biases. (Bordalo et al., 2016)

Stereotypes are often unavoidable; they can be seen to be part of our society and escaping learning them is impossible (Devine, 1989). A common theory on the activation of stereotypes is that of the two-stage model: the stereotypes are activated even by the presence of appropriate objects, but after the stereotype has been activated, the following actions are conscious actions defined by people’s values (Bargh, Chen & Burrows, 1996). It has been shown (e.g. Devine, 1989) that both persons who have prejudices and those that don’t, are knowledgeable of the existing cultural stereotypes, and that the stereotypes are automatically activated in presence of people of the cultural group.

One of the important features of stereotypes is that are they formed in the conscious or the unconscious mind? Greenwald and Banaji (1995, p. 15) recognize implicit or unconscious stereotypes as “introspectively unidentified traces of past experience that mediate attributions of quality to members of a social category”. An important feature of this explanation is the understanding of unidentified and past experience. These implicit stereotypes may rise even in people who explicitly do not support these stereotypes (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Devine (1989) studied the connection of prejudice and stereotypes and found also that when there is no possibility to consciously control the stereo-type congruent evaluations, both low- and high-prejudice persons showed adherence to the stereo-type thoughts. However, when there was a possibility to inhibit those thoughts, the low-prejudice persons were able to replace the stereotypical evaluations with thoughts of negations of the stereotype. This means

that since most of us have existing stereotypes in our minds, they are often activated automatically, but we can moderate them if we want to.

As stereotyping leads to prejudice, this can have an effect on people in stereotyped groups. Peoples belonging to the group that is faced with stereotypes are disadvantaged not on what they actually are or do, but because of their group (Heilman, 2012). In addition, they might face judgment for not adhering to the stereotype. In situations where actors do not fit their stereotype-conforming attributes, they might experience the backlash effect, meaning that they will be faced with social and economic reprisals (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). Landy (2008) lists the framework that is involved in the discrimination due to stereotyping. According to him, we all have stereotypes and many of them are in fact negative towards ethnic groups, women or sexuality. If personnel decisions are subjective and there are no safeguards in place to prevent stereotypical thinking, the decisions may be biased against the stereotyped people. This highlights the importance on acknowledging stereotypes in the workplace.

In the following chapter I will then relate these stereotypes to gender and leadership, and what are the stereotypical assumptions of who are leaders.

2.1.2 Think manager - think male

We have now discussed the the activation of stereotypes, and in this chapter we will look into the stereotypical assumptions of the gender role and the leader role. The basis of the role congruity model is that in general women are not seen as leaders, and I will now present some evidence to support this assumption. Stereotypes might portray women biologically less inclined to be effective leaders, even though there is ample research showing that biologically men and women have as effective and similar leadership styles (Appelbaum, Audet & Miller, 2003).

One of the most prominent studies in the field of sex role stereotypes and management characteristics is that of Schein 1973 and 1975, and the following replications of the original studies done in the past decades. Schein studied the perceptions of middle managers of

women and men in general, and of successful middle managers, rated based on gender-stereotypical traits. These studies established the existence of the “think manager- think male”- belief. Schein (1973) discovered that characteristics that are associated with managers, are also rather linked with men than with women. This 1973 study was performed on male managers, and in a replication study in 1975, Schein discovered similar results amongst female middle managers, enforcing the view that both men and women associated successful manager qualities more with men than with women.

Schein, Mueller and Jacobson (1989) replicated the Schein (1973, 1975) studies again amongst male and female undergraduate management students and discovered that the male students still held onto the beliefs of successful managers possessing more masculine characteristics, whilst the female students had changed their views and didn’t describe successful managers with masculine terms. Around the same time, Brenner, Tomkiewicz and Schein (1989) discovered that male middle managers still were keeping their leadership stereotypes, whilst women didn’t appear to be sex-typing the managerial positions anymore. In this study, in the views of men, managers were portrayed to possess more characteristics perceived masculine than those feminine. Women saw on the other hand that managers should possess both feminine and masculine characteristics.

Dodge, Gilroy and Fenzel (1995) obtained similar results, as male MBA students perceived requisite management characteristics to be held by men more likely than by women; amongst female students again there was no correlation. Duehr and Bono (2006) replicated Schein’s (1973) study with both students and managers and found that the attitudes of male managers towards women as leaders had changed: women were seen to be more leader-like than in previous studies. The attitudes of male students had not changed that much, they still held onto the same stereotypes as in previous studies. Women were seen as more masculine and agentic, however it was not studied whether this change was seen as a step towards positive, or did the change towards a gender non-congruous direction hinder the perception of the women. Women’s attitudes towards women were changing towards a same-sex bias, meaning that women actually saw women as better leaders than men, which is somewhat in

same trajectory to the previous studies that showed that women's attitudes towards female leadership stereotypes had changed. It would seem that amongst men, the requisite leadership stereotypes hold strongly, even throughout years and position, whereas women do not seem to possess the think manager-think male -attitude less.

The Schein studies were replicated again by Schein, Mueller, Lituchy and Liu (1996) in Japan and China, and in these countries men and women both see successful managers to possess more masculine characteristics. The same study compared the results also to USA, UK and Germany, discovering that only in the US, women and men were seen to possess the required characteristics for management. This seems to indicate that these beliefs are prevalent also globally.

In other studies, Koenig et al. (2011) performed a meta-analysis that confirmed the existence of leadership being seen as masculine and creating prejudice towards female leaders. Walker and Aritz (2015) conducted their study on recognition of women as leaders, in a business school, which is traditionally masculine environment. They found that women were not recognized as leaders, even if they were observed to display leadership qualities. They imply that in a male-dominated environment, the leadership styles that the women exhibited were not seen as "doing" leadership. Carli et al. (2016) found evidence supporting these findings amongst scientists: men and scientists were both seen as agentic, whereas women communal.

Koch, D'Mello and Sackett (2015) did an exhaustive meta-analysis on the gender bias in the workplace. Their research supports the role congruity theory: especially in male-dominated workplaces women were more likely to meet with discrimination, but in female-dominated or integrated environments there was no significant sign of this. Men showed more bias with regards to gender-congruity than women. Interestingly, there was pro-male bias in female-dominated environments in the views of both men and women.

Politics obviously portray a good picture about how women in places of power are thought upon. In an interesting study by Gervais & Hillard (2011), they compared how voters saw politicians Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin. Clinton was seen to be less stereotypically feminine than Palin, and men rather wanted to vote for Clinton than Palin. The people who

saw either of the women as being “warm” more likely also voted them, but the people that perceived Palin as competent rather also voted her, than those that saw Clinton as competent. Variables of benevolent and hostile sexism were linked to rather voting for Palin.

Other situations in which the role congruity theory may be activated are those of leader emergence and recruitment situations. Perception of women as not leader-like can decrease their possibilities in emerging as leaders in situations where there are no appointed leaders, or them being ignored in situations when managers are hired or promoted. In meta-analysis by Roth et al., (2012), women were given better job performance evaluations in field studies, whilst their promotion ratings were lower than those for men. Walker and Aritz (2015) showed in their study on leadership emergence that even if women exhibit the skills desired for leaders, they can still be ignored as being the leader, despite their skills. The generally negative views of female leadership qualifications by male business students in several studies may transfer to business life as these students enter management positions, unless the attitudes are modified by working life.

Through a meta-analysis, Badura et al. (2018) discovered that in leadership emergence, men seem to be emerging as leaders more often than women did. Their research spanned over 59 years of research, and even as there seemed to be convergence in the emergence of women and men, there still exists a difference. Lanaj and Hollenbeck (2015) studied the leadership emergence in self-managing teams, and discovered that in an equal situation, men do over-emerge as leaders. However, women that portrayed agentic behaviour, contrary to their stereotypical expectations, over-emerged as leaders. There was no evidence on the theory applying to men, as their communal behaviour rather caused under-emergence in leadership.

In a study by Rudman and Glick (2001), they found that from identically presented man and a woman, the female applicant that behaved in an agentic manager was rated “less socially skilled and likeable” (p. 757). The female applicant was also perceived to be “less hireable”, until the situation was changed and the job was “feminised” to include for example interpersonal skills. For men, the dominative style was not as effective. Reuben, Sapienza and Zingales (2014) found similar results where men and women were being hired to a

position that would require the candidates to perform an arithmetic task, both women and men discriminated against the female candidates even though their competencies were at the same level as those of the male candidates. These examples presented in this part show that there exists clear evidence on the think male- think manager paradigm. In the next part I will discuss the ways in which the congruity between the leader and gender role may be mitigated.

2.1.3 Mitigation of role congruity theory prejudice

We have now discussed the evidence for the think manager- think male-paradigm. There are, however, situations in which the stereotypes would be moderated. Eagly and Karau (2002) note that in the case of a larger incongruity between the gender role and the leader role this would lead to more severe perceptions. The incongruity between the gender and leader role could be mitigated with either changing the gender role or changing the leader role. Also, if the stereotypical assumptions are not activated in the situation, perception of the incongruity should be lessened (Heilman, 2012). The things that affect these role perceptions are very much related to the persons involved in the assessment and the context of the leadership situation. I will now discuss in more detail how these mitigating factors can affect the gender and leader roles.

The perceiver and the target

There is research on how the gender of the perceiver influences how they see women as leaders and how they see the position of a leader. It has been researched that men seem to have a more masculine stereotype of the leader position than women have (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This would lead to men being more inclined to be less favorable to the women in leadership positions. Kark, Waismel-Manor and Shamir (2012) also found corroboration for this: in same-sex relations the perceptions of gender were less stereotypical, and the study subjects saw the leaders possess more attributes and behaviors than in a situation of cross-sex. Crites et al (2015) also report that for women, it was seen more preferable to report to a female supervisor, whereas for men gender of the supervisor didn't seem to have any impact on satisfaction. Thus it would seem that the gender of the perceiver affects their thoughts on

women, meaning that in a female-dominated field women should be perceived more leader-like and in male-dominated field there could be struggles.

The perception of femininity obviously increases the gender role. It can be argued that if women portray themselves as more feminine, it triggers the more stereotypical female gender role (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Also, in a position where women are in a minority position, the perception of the female gender role might be emphasized due to the greater discrepancy between men and women. Balachandra, Briggs, Eddleston and Brush (2019) found that even though investors do not seem to bias against women, displaying feminine characteristics instigated those biases. An important factor in the perceived deviation is the perceiver's personal inclination to support the existing norms. This can be affected by the perceivers' sex, time period or the culture (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Koch et al. (2015) found that when providing information about the capabilities of the person, there was some decrease in the gender bias, but if this information was in anyway ambiguous, no mitigating effect was seen. What is important is that when the respondents were made feel accountable for their decisions, their gender bias decreased meaning that making people aware of their decisions mitigates the effect of the stereotypes. Also, professionals with experience on organizational decision making showed less inclination to have gender stereotypes than untrained working adults or undergraduates. Heilman (2012) also emphasizes the importance of clarity of the source of performance.

It has to be also remembered that even within the female spectrum there are differences, for example due to racial factors. For example Rosette, Koval, Ma and Livingston (2016) discovered that racial stereotypes towards women in working life differ, also mitigating the agentic-behavior backlash. For example black women were perceived as agentic and thus facing less gender bias towards them, whereas white women were seen mostly communal, and facing backlash.

The context

The context where the gender and leader roles are assessed can have an effect on the severity of the incongruence. There can be differences in the cultural and subcultural incongruities between the gender and leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Obviously, in a work place setting where the leader role is masculine, for example in the military or science, the female gender role would be less congruent with the leader role, resulting to greater bias according to the role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002, Heilman, 2012). These roles and perceptions have also been changing in the past decades, as the position of women has become more equal. One important issue is, as discussed above, the gender of the perceiver which then leads to male- and female-dominated workplaces. Garcia-Retamero and Lopez-Zafra (2006) found that for women in gender role non-congruent industries, people saw them to be less effective and likely to perform worse. Paustian-Underdahl, Walker and Woehr (2014) indicate that in organisations that were male-dominated, men were seen as more effective than women, however there seemed to be a slight change towards favoring women seen over time. Interestingly, in top middle management positions, women were however seen as more effective. This can be due to several reasons, but most likely women are seen to be especially competent if they reach top positions.

According to Garcia-Retamero and Lopez-Zafra (2006), both women and men prejudiced against women, with the exception of cases of gender-congruent industry. When asked for the attributes for women's success in a gender-role incongruent industry, respondents saw them to be more of external, which supports previous research that women's success is more often to be seen dependent on rather external factors such as need to broaden the staff than on their internal attributes such as capacity. In a female-dominated field women might not be seen as women managers, but just managers (Appelbaum et al., 2003). In a male-dominated work environment, men obviously are more in the power position, and if their behavior is that of the "old boys' club", these men do not see the female capabilities as important when making hiring or promotion decisions (Appelbaum et al., 2003).

One way to cope with facing prejudice in the work-place is the increased level of feeling of belonging. There are several studied buffers that help women to better belong to a gender-imbalanced field, such as social networks and existence of positive female role models. Increased amount of women at the workplace can lead to better perceptions of women's capabilities (Heilman, 2012). In the scientific field, the more there were women, the more the stereotypes between scientists and women matched (Carli et al., 2016). The existence of a positive female role model can decrease the perceived threat of social identity threat of gender-imbalanced work environments (Smart Richman, Michelle & Wood, 2011). Supportive social networks, or their availability, and the role of family encouragement can also serve as positive buffers in decreasing the threat for social identity in a male-dominated field (Smart Richman et al., 2011).

Time has been shown to change attitudes, both the gender role and the leader role have gone through changes in perceptions in the the recent years. In leadership, the role of androgynous leader has emerged; in this role the leader possess both masculine and feminine leadership qualities, often seemingly taking the best qualities from both perceptions (Appelbaum et al., 2003). Also, androgyny does not penalize on the feminine qualities, as long as the masculine qualities are observed also, making it easier for women with perceived androgyny to emerge as a leader. Transformational leadership has been becoming the new ideal for a leader, and this might suit women as the stereotypes for women fit the transformational leader better than that of a transactional leader, diminishing the incongruity.

According to (Kark et al., 2012) androgynous gender-role identity was seen being connected to a transformational leadership style and followers' identification. Interestingly however, perceived femininity linked more to effective leadership than masculine gender-role. The researchers also studied the perceptions in same and cross-sex relationships and suggest that effective leaders in gender-role non-congruent situation should blend the feminine and masculine characteristics. This would imply that women can mitigate the prejudice by employing a mixture of leadership characteristics.

Duehr and Bono (2006) discuss whether their findings of changing stereotypes towards women actually reflect a real change or do the responses just reflect on the answers that are socially desirable. The perceptions can change naturally when more women come to positions that were seen as male-dominated (Heilman, 2012). In the Donnelly et al. (2016) study, it was discovered that the attitudes towards equal roles for women at the workplace amongst twelfth graders and adults had become more accepting from 1976 to 2013. However, there seems to be some change in women's endorsement of feminine traits, which suggest that women do not value traditional femininity that much anymore (Donnelly & Twenge, 2017). Through Haines, Deaux and Lofaro (2016) analysis, it would seem that the gender stereotypes have not changed during the past decades, but for example the attitudes towards people voting for a female president have changed radically in the last decade, from 33% support in 1937 to 92% support in 2006 (Eagly, 2007). These changes in towards favorable treatment of women have also led to women reaching more and better manager positions.

Organizations can themselves create workplaces where the stereotypes are not as easily activated. For example broadening the expectations of the job can alleviate the negative expectations (Gaucher, Friesen & Kay, 2011). Using gender-neutral language can also decrease the incongruity between the expectations and stereotypes (Horvath & Sczesny, 2016). Duehr and Bono (2006) suggest that through measures of sensitivity training, the perceptions can also be changed. Also in evaluation situations, by making the criteria concrete and aiming for just assessment, the underlying biases should be alleviated (Heilman, 2012).

I have now presented the basis of the role congruity theory and some evidence on the think manager- think male paradigm. Also, the factors that could mitigate the perceived incongruity were discussed. In the next part I will start to build the context for my study, where I will position my framework.

2.2 Building context: women in a male-dominated field

I have now presented the role congruity theory through which I will build my theoretical framework for the empirical study. I will relate the role congruity theory to the male-dominated field by using it as my context for the empirical study. In this chapter I will discuss some of the characteristics of women working in male-dominated fields.

It could be implied that the mechanisms of the double bind would be even more triggered in the context of a male-dominated field. There is some evidence produced in the previous chapters that the salience of women in male-dominated fields would increase the appearance of the lack of fit in leader positions (Heilman, 2012). In a male-dominated field, many of the leadership positions don't simply create incongruence between the leadership role and gender role, but that of the position role. Most of the positions in a male-dominated field are obviously held by men, implying that the stereotype of the position holder contains also masculine characteristics. Adding this initial condition to that of leadership, should provide extra difficulties for women to reach and succeed in leadership positions in a male-dominated field.

Women in male-dominated fields can face severe challenges in organizational practices related to their physical, identity and work-life balance needs (Martin and Barnard 2013). Women face biased organizational structures, biased co-workers, sex-based harassment and penalties for motherhood (Kaiser & Spalding, 2015). Women might perceive they are needed to put in more effort than their male colleagues (Smith, Lewis, Hawthorne & Hodges, 2013) and they may feel that their capability is threatened by the existence of stereotypes (Steele, James & Chait Barnett, 2002). There might even be severe backlash towards successful women in male-dominated fields: they can be seen as hostile, selfish and cold (Heilman, 2012).

Women may have found coping mechanisms to deal with the discrimination. There is evidence that women try to resolve situations of gender-role non-congruence by emphasising the masculine characteristics (Derks, Van Laar & Ellemers, 2016). Glass and Cook (2016) discovered that women leaders in male-dominated fields were likely to seek out promotions

to higher risk positions, and through this create themselves a reputation as a competent leader. Women felt they needed to prove themselves in a risky position in order to create the visibility that was lacking due to the underrepresentation and stereotypes towards female leaders. In gender-biased workplaces, women also may position themselves into a position where they distance themselves from feminine behavior and other women, and deny discrimination (Derks, van Laar, Ellemers & de Groot, 2011).

The feeling of belonging of women in a male-dominated field can also be moderated through for example with a history of fair treatment and minimal exposure to discrimination (Smart Richman et al, 2011). Also, as presented in the previous part, the use of gender-neutral language or paying attention to rewarding categories may provide more possibilities for women to succeed. I have here only presented a small set of obstacles women may face in a male-dominated field, but in the next part I will discuss more about the position of women in maritime.

2.2.1 Women in maritime

My choice for a male-dominated field in this study is the maritime field in Finland. I define the maritime field to consist of all the companies that are related to ships: shipping companies, insurers, maritime lawyers, brokers etc. In this chapter I will go through some of the statistics of women in maritime, especially in Finland. Most of these statistics are related to women in positions at sea, but I would argue that at least some of the disparities can be reflected to maritime positions at the office as positions at sea also serve as a pipeline for careers in the office.

It has been estimated that only 2% of world's seafarers are women, whilst in a group of eight European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the UK), the percentage in the beginning of the 2000's was 9.15%, representing a slightly higher percentage which is very much due to especially the high number of women seafarers in Sweden and Denmark (IMHA, ITF, ISWAN, SHS, 2015). According to the Review of Maritime Transport (Unctad, 2018) the amount of women entering the shipping industry in the world is increasing, and more women enrolling for maritime-related studies, however in

management positions women still fill 7% of management positions, and 0.17% of women have places in executive leadership roles worldwide. Women mainly work in maritime in administrative, junior and professional level roles, and especially in technical and safety-related functions women are underrepresented with 14% of the workforce. Resulting from this, women make money around 45% less than men. The disparity especially in the number of female seafarers is translated to the maritime field at shore, as a natural progression for office professions is to transfer from sea. This leads to also the lack of role models for girls who would be interested in joining the maritime field. The attitudes and the stereotypes towards women in maritime seem to be negative (e.g. (Kitada, 2013)), even though the importance of women and a gender-balanced workplace is recognized also.

I received data for the purposes of this study from the Finnish Seafarers' Pension Fund regarding the amount and age distribution of Finnish women working as seafarers (figure 1). According to the age distribution, the women between 20 and 30 are most represented, but their amount declines as they reach age of 30. This can be due to the time of starting a family and not being able to connect it with a profession at sea. Around the age of 50, women again return to the professions at sea.

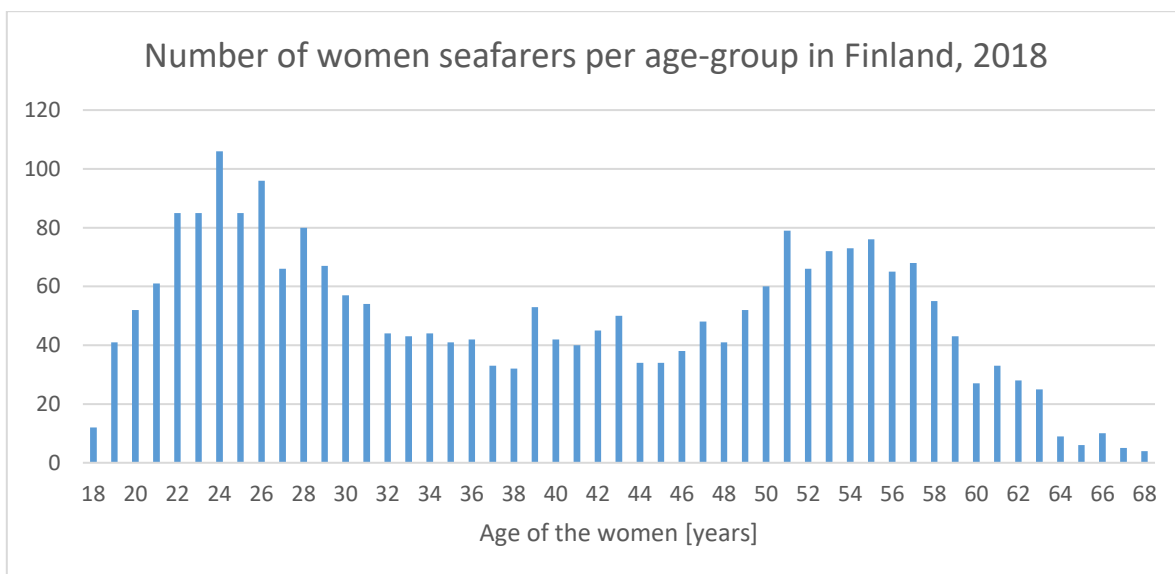


Figure 1. The number of women seafarers per age-group in Finland in 2018 (Data received from Seafarers' Pension Fund, 2019)

Another statistic (Traficom, 2019) that relates to the number of Finnish women onboard ships is the amount of work years done per year (Figure 2). This amount of work years done per year relates to the seasonality of some vessel types and then combines all the part-time work done in a year into full work years. What makes this statistic interesting is that it shows that in the past years, the percentage of women's work has stayed the same. Even though there has been discussion in the field that there would be now more women and that it is easier for women to enter the maritime profession, their percentage of the work done has not increased.

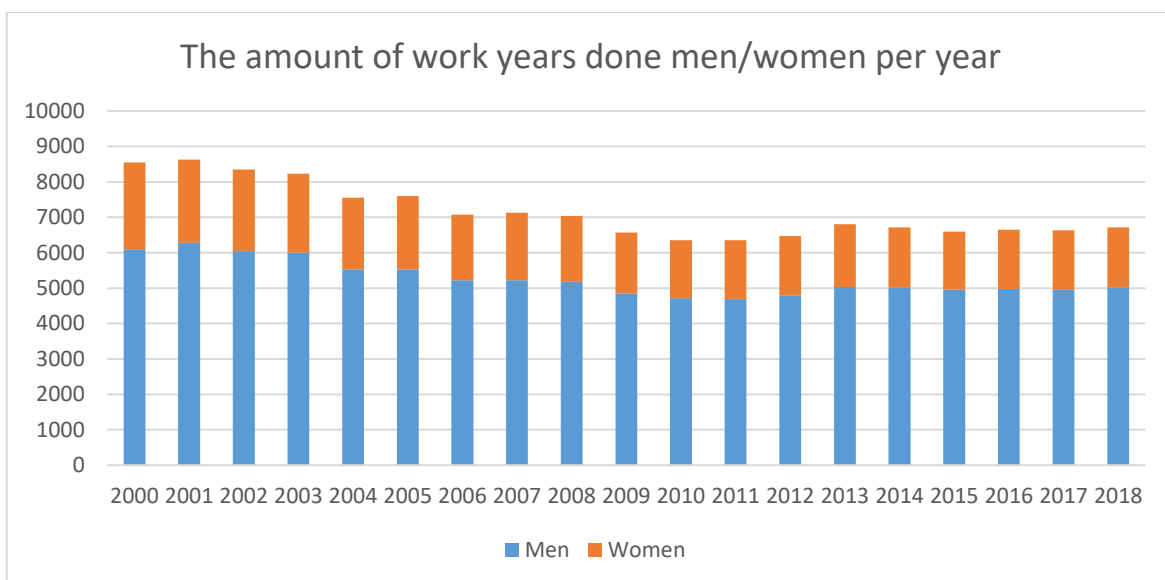


Figure 2 The amount of work years done by Finnish men and women per year 2000-2018. (Traficom, 2019)

Other statistics that I received was the amount of Finnish women in the crew and as officers onboard different ship types (Figure 3). It can be noted that the passenger ship crews are overrepresented, but in this case it has to be remembered that on passenger ships there is a wider range of duties in for example customer service, that then leads to more professions that can be considered as feminine. It has to be noted that the number of female officers in passenger ships is however quite low.

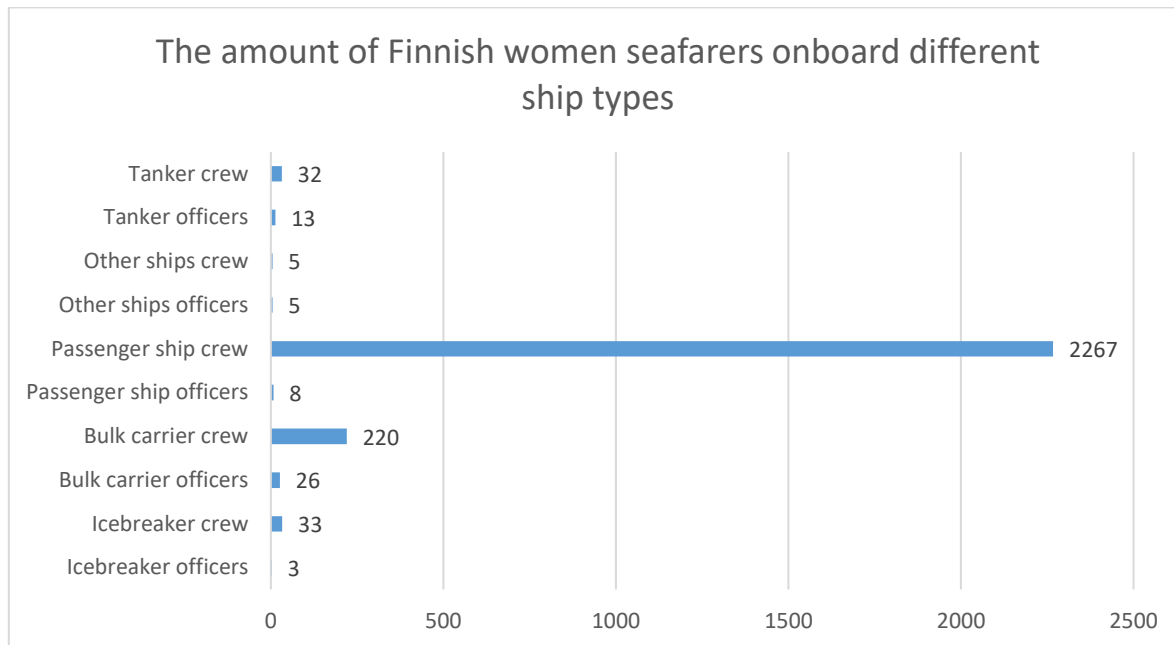


Figure 3 The amount of Finnish women seafarers onboard different ship types (Seafarers' Pension Fund, 2019)

These statistics tell a story of a field that has incorporated women into the profession, but that the field is unevenly spread out. Women mainly are in positions that could be seen as feminine, working in passenger ships. The percentage of women's work on ships has not changed in the past decade, and women still leave maritime professions when they are around 30 years old. Also, it is good to remember that these statistics are from Finland, where there is generally good equality between men and women.

These statistics reflect the fact that working onboard a ship can be a difficult environment for a woman. Women face mistreatment such as sexual harassment, abuse and bullying on board, and even pregnancy tests can be used as during hiring process (IMHA, ITF, ISWAN, SHS, 2015). Organizations like the IMO have been bringing about campaigns to instigate research and share information on the position of women at sea, in order to encourage recruitment. Women onboard are seen as an asset, creating a diverse and balanced crew that improves the morale and the atmosphere. In some countries even some maritime schools have traditionally only accepted men or very few women, and there is a lack of women in the educator side of maritime also (Popescu & Varsami, 2010), although the number of women has been rising

in the past years (Horck, 2010). Onboard, the culture is mainly male-dominated, reflecting masculine values and norms, making women feel the need to modify their behaviour and attitudes (Kitada, 2013). Women, in order to adapt to the environment, disguised their feminine signs and constructed a new gender identity, which often reflected to masculine ideals. Women in maritime also seem to underestimate their leadership skills, whilst men tended to overrate their capabilities (Ortega et al., 2015). If women continue to feel that their skills for the job are inferior, this diminishes their willingness to pursue careers in this field. I have now presented some of the context for my choice of a male-dominated field, and next I will combine my literature review into a theoretical framework.

2.3 Theoretical framework

In this chapter I will present the theoretical framework for my empirical study. In the framework (Figure 4), my base is the role congruity theory, which states that if a woman is facing a perceived incongruity between their position and their gender, they are usually negatively judged. In a male-dominated field, this incongruity amongst female leaders should be even greater, as they are in incongruent positions in two ways, as women in maritime and as women in leadership positions. Prejudice through the double bind will then produce for women less access to leadership roles and more obstacles on the road of becoming successful. (Eagly & Karau, 2002)

2.3.1 Role congruity theory's gender and leader roles in the maritime

As has been presented in the previous chapters, based on Eagly and Karau's (2002) role congruity model, prejudice against female leaders is instigated when the perceivers note the incongruity between the required attributes for a social group (in this case women) and the required attributes of the social role (in this case a leader). The gender and leader roles are built on the descriptive and injunctive norms that specify ideas on what women do and what they should be doing.

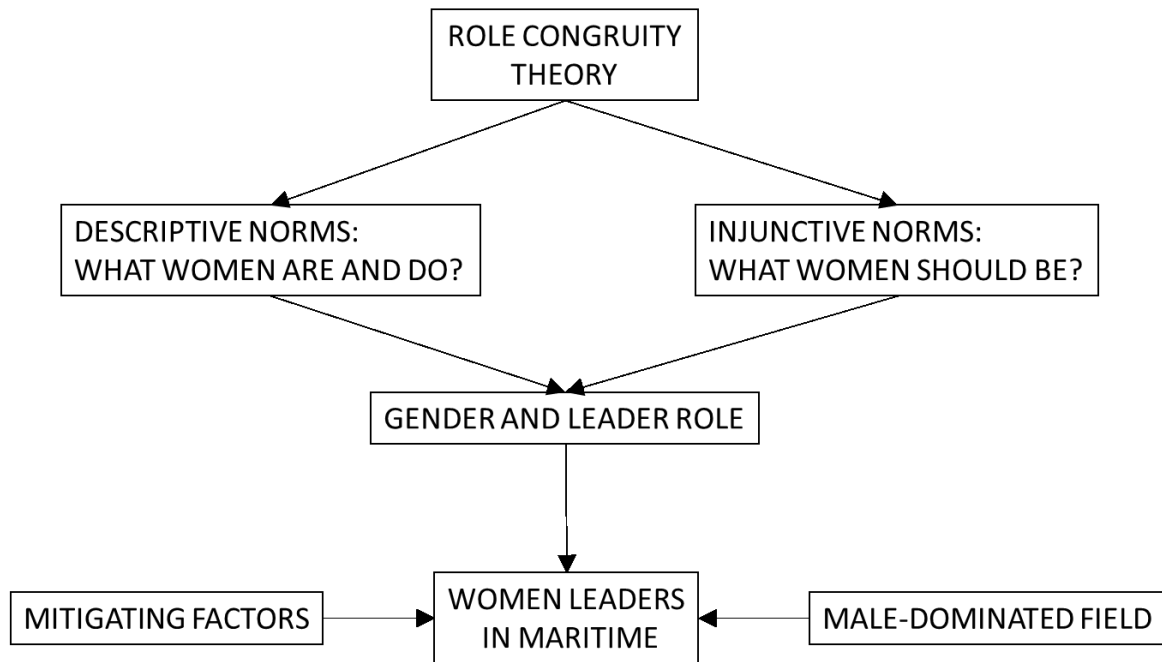


Figure 4 Theoretical framework

Gender is the strongest basis for categorizing people and stereotypes of men and women are easily and automatically activated (Eagly & Karau, 2002). There is ample evidence on the think manager-think male paradigm that I presented in the chapters above (e.g. Schein 1973, 1975; Brenner et al, 1989, Duerh and Bono, 2006), in different settings and countries. If this thinking is prevalent as it has been recorded, women should be facing judgment especially in being and reaching leader positions. There are some changes to be observed also, as women's attitudes have changed during the years to a wider perception of female leadership (Duehr & Bono, 2006). However, if men are still in majority of the leadership positions and thus making hiring and promotion decisions, and their views still remain loyal to the communal-woman stereotype, in male-dominated fields especially it should be harder for a woman to rise into leadership position and be judged fairly based on performance.

2.3.2 Mitigating factors in the framework

There are however mitigating circumstances that can minimize the effects described by the role congruity theory. As the theory is emerging from the discrepancy of the gender role and the leader role, if there are changes in either one of them, the obstacles women leaders face

in their careers may be changed. The important parts of this mitigation are the context and the perceiver. If the context changes, for example if the perception of the leader changes from masculine and agentic to feminine and communal, or even androgynous, there is less incongruence between the gender and leader role (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Also, if the perceiver themselves is for example privy to their inherent stereotypical thoughts, they may change their perception of seeing women as leaders. Through research of gender stereotypes and the challenges women face, there is a possibility to facilitate changes in the legal and structural corporate landscape.

2.3.3 Maritime providing the context of male-dominated field

I will add to the role congruity theory the context of a male-dominated field of maritime in Finland. It could be hypothesized that in a male-dominated field, the perceptions of the masculinity of the leader are greater. There is evidence pointed out in the previous chapter (Kitada, 2013) that women on board ships have to do gender management in order to fit in better to the environment. This would point towards the thought that women see that they need to change who they are in order to fit in better, and to perform better. This is very much in line with the role congruity theory. Women in maritime in Finland also are in a minority at sea, and in the world in the office they mainly stay in administrative duties and not rise into top management (Unctad, 2018). There are however increasing amounts of women entering the maritime sector in the world and creating an equal opportunities workplace is important for their success. Seeing towards this, it is interesting to see how the women in my empirical study see their rise to the top and did they meet obstacles related to the role congruity theory. All these together will bring about the theoretical framework for my empirical section. In the next chapter I will present my methodology for this research.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In this chapter I aim to discuss my research methodology of qualitative feminist research, and why I have chosen to use this particular methodology. I will also discuss my research setting, methods and possible ethical concerns in my study.

3.1 Qualitative feminist research methodology

The aim of qualitative business research is to gain knowledge on the workings of real-life business contexts and sense-making aiming for changing the existing structures by providing a critical and reflexive view. Through qualitative research, we aim to provide a holistic understanding of the social business world and its inner workings. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008)

According to Buchanan and Bryman (2007), studying organizations has widened its boundaries to include a wide variety of research, with diverse aims. It is not just aiming for identifying causal links or testing hypotheses, but rather aiming for building complex textures and rich description. The wide paradigms have led to also a wide selection of methodological inventiveness, where fresh approaches emerge for conceptualization, analysis and theory building. Like Eriksson and Kovalainen (Chapter 16, 2008) say, methodological choices can be used to direct the ways for and types of knowledge production, and in that way these choices become political. Buchanan and Bryman (2007) argue also that the choice of the research method is a complex set of considerations, and not just related to the research aim and that the research method always frames the observation, interpretation and the theory development of data collection.

Personal preferences are often told to be not get in the way of research, or research method choices. However, researchers most often do study those topics that they personally find interesting, and feel comfortable with. Personal and political factors are no longer something that needs to be overcome, and reflexivity has been encouraged especially in research methods choices (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007). This gives me the possibility to link my own feminist thoughts into this research through using the idea of feminist methodology in my research.

The feminist principles in feminist research are not linked to the method, epistemology or ontology, but are rather a holistic view that is in place in all the stages of the research, and affect the collection and analysis of the data (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007). In a way, any research can be executed through feminist methodology, as it does not give the researcher clear guidelines on what to do, but rather bringing the consciousness of feminism and its ideas into the research.

The aim of feminist research is to challenge the oppressing structures and ideologies that are still existing in society today. Through the documentation of women's lives and experiences, these stereotypes and biases can be brought to surface, and emancipation and empowerment can be found (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007). Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) note that it is difficult to create a clear definition for feminist research, but it is always known to be grounded in the experiences of the gendered social life, where the notions of gender, position and relation are the interest. Male-dominated academic settings and male scientific culture throughout the centuries has created the traditional approaches in all science. It could be argued that women's experiences and concerns were defined by masculine terms and as subjective (Letherby, 2003).

Throughout the entire feminist research project, it is important for the researcher following the feminist methodology to practice reflexivity: this practice will create mindfulness of the researcher's own positions with regards to the research and the subjects. (Hesse-Biber, 2007) Reflexivity leads to linking the researcher to the research process, instead of being just an observer that writes down facts. In feminist research, the researcher really doesn't exclude themselves from the process or reporting, but takes part in the knowledge production, taking along all their subjectivities (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). This choice of methodology requires a lot of reflexivity and linking oneself to the research. I do not aim to be the objective researcher that distances themselves from the study, but I specifically aim to bring my own persona and experiences to the stage also. Still of course the main aim of this research is to bring out the voices of my interviewees through the feminist research principles.

3.2 Philosophical assumptions

My background is in engineering, where the science is exact. There is a theory, for which empirical evidence is gathered to prove that E equals mc^2 . The concept of truth in physics and mathematics is quite similar to everyone on earth, unless you decide to believe that the earth is flat. But with social sciences and organization studies the world is not so clear and everything is open to interpretation. Also, even though philosophical assumptions may be difficult for new researchers, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) note that knowing one's basis for knowledge production is necessary in feminist methodology. This is why I will discuss next my philosophical assumptions regarding my research.

Researchers usually lean into certain ontological and epistemological assumptions when conducting their research; sometimes those assumptions are led by tradition (most often not even acknowledging the underlying fundamentals), sometimes by conscious and deliberate debate (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Philosophical assumptions are important in defining my research design and strategy, as I reflect on my ways of gaining knowledge and how I can link this knowledge to pre-existing assumptions. In feminist research, there are no “pre-sets” for the philosophical assumptions, so mine derive from my personal views of social sciences.

Ontology can be defined as the existence of “people, society and the world” (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) or as the “nature of reality” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). In the subjective ontology, there are no two similar realities, but perceptions and experiences are created for each person, changing over time and context. Relativistic views see that there is not some single uniting truth that the researcher can discover, but many perspectives. (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012) This perspective relates well to my research, as in interview study I will be getting different subjective views on the topics; as many perspectives as there are research subjects.

Epistemological philosophies are interested in what knowledge is, how it is produced, where it comes from and what are its limits. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) Epistemology can be defined as “the best ways of enquiring into the nature of the world” (Easterby-Smith et al.,

2012, p. 17) In the subjective epistemological view it says that there is no neutral world that can be reached as all is created by our own observations and interpretations. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) These constructivist views make the observer part of what is being observed, rejecting the positivists ideas of distancing the researcher from the study. (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012) In my opinion, especially in feminist research, the main principles already lead to the more constructivist views, where the aim is not theory creation but the understanding of the world.

3.3 Research methods

Whereas methodology is more the overall umbrella of my research ideals, the methods are more the individual techniques I will be using in my research, including interviews and analysis methods. In this chapter I will discuss my research method of in-depth interviewing. The choice of the interview method is dependent on what I actually want to gain with my research: am I testing a theory or gathering exploratory data trying to aim for understanding (Hesse-Biber, 2007). There are different types of interviews that can be distinguished by their method of “informal” to “formal” (Hesse-Biber, 2007). The semi-structured interview, which I have chosen as my interview method, usually runs on a set of questions on a particular agenda, but the order of these questions is not strict, and the researcher can come up with new questions that arise from the interview. With less structured interviews, there is room for the interviewee to raise new issues and make clear what are the most important ones of the issues (Letherby, 2003).

Hesse-Biber (2007) describes in-depth interviews as issue-oriented, meaning that it can be used for researching a particular topic and gaining focused information. In feminist research, the lived and often hidden experiences of the marginalized are those that are given voice through in-depth interviews. That voice is the subject’s own, not only that of the researcher, and in giving the voice to women, often thoughts that have been ignored or written by men can be discovered. Ann Oakley (1981) describes the dilemma of the researcher considered as the producer of information for the research, creating a hierarchical and exploitative interview situation. In her opinion, the “mythology of the hygienic research” (p. 58) should

be replaced by seeing personal involvement as more than bias; as a way for people to let the other into their life. She states that in most cases it is best that the interviewer and interviewee are in a non-hierarchical relationship, the researcher also investing their own personal identity in the interview.

As it has been stated before, feminist research is not limited in regards of choosing the research methods (Letherby, 2003, Hesse-Biber, 2007), so the choice of interview style also varies from research project to other, and different styles can be used together. What then makes the interview to follow the principles of feminist research, is the types of questions that are asked. The questions that are asked aim for understanding women's lives and promoting social justice and change. Also, the research aims to be mindful in the relationship between the researcher and their subject and the power and authority that the researcher's role causes. (Hesse-Biber, 2007)

3.4 Setting and sample selection

This chapter will delve more into the practicalities of my research, especially the context and the ways in which conducted my interviews. I used the Finnish maritime sector as my choice of a male-dominated field. The maritime sector can be defined in many ways, but in my context, I'll define it to cover all the companies that operate in relation to ships and shipping. This can include shipping companies, brokers, insurers, shipyards, ports, stevedores etc. The maritime sector is traditionally very male-dominated: it has been estimated that in the maritime workforce, around 2% are women. Women in maritime also face discrimination already in education, then later in recruitment and also in salary levels. (ITF Seafarers, 2019). I have in my introduction and literature review presented some of the other facts supporting the male-domination of shipping in Finland. The entire field is also very traditional, relating to the practices of the highly hierarchical organization onboard ships. This makes the selection of this field interesting, as it has a long history, with the roots in the operation of ships and strong leadership onboard. I, however, chose to concentrate my study on the shore-operation of the maritime field, as I found it interesting to see how would the practices from

sea and from land mix together in the office, and how women from various backgrounds see the leadership landscape in the sector.

I chose to select this field for my study, as I myself have also worked in this sector, as my background education is from naval architecture, and I have worked in jobs related to ships for over a decade. I have an insight on the workings of the organizations, and also can perhaps understand the experiences better, and create connections as I might have faced similar types of situations and emotions in my career. However, this leads to the fact that I might also be asserting myself too much in the research, looking through a lens that I have created for myself during the history in this field.

I selected my interviewees through my connections in the WISTA Finland organization, as according to Buchanan and Bryman (2007), social networks and interpersonal skills can be a key to gaining interesting organizational research. WISTA (Women in Shipping and Trading Association) is a global organization that provides a network for female executives working in the maritime and logistics sector. WISTA Finland is the Finnish chapter of the international WISTA, and currently has around 150 members: female executives and experts from many companies in the maritime sector in Finland. I myself have been a member of the organization for 7 years now and am also the president of the organization.

For selecting my interviewees, I used the connections that I have been able to create in this position. I set my criteria for the selection of my interviewees to women who are currently or have before worked in the executive level in maritime companies. I aimed to find women who are generally in the management board level, or at least in upper management, who have usually had to face more of the situations my research studies. Also, I aimed to find women who have worked at least more than 5 years in the field, as I also wanted women who have already have longer experience in a male-dominated field. I didn't have a specific age range for the subjects, as limiting the age of the women might have limited the range of the experiences.

In qualitative research, and especially in interview research, the sample size is something that is often debatable. Qualitative research that concerns only people from a small sample can

be often seen as lacking validity, but the goal shouldn't be to necessarily make generalizations, but rather understand the experiences of the subjects. According to Patton (2002) the sample size in qualitative research is dependent on the research question, research project economic resources and the context, and that there are actually no clear rules for deciding on the extent of your data pool. Hesse-Biber (2007) notes that sample size is obviously subject to peer review, consensual validation and judgment. They also remind that procedures and decisions have to be described, explained and justified for the judgment of the reader. Taking these into consideration, my research includes eight interviewees. I aimed for 10 interviewees, but as the pool of women leaders in top management positions in Finland is limited, and I received two declines of interviews, I settled for eight. Whilst doing the interviews I already started to reach the saturation point in my data collection, the feeling that I have already gained enough information for my study. Going through the data, I do not feel that having extra interviewees would have given new perspectives, but rather enforced the existing ones.

I knew all my interviewees beforehand through my association in Wista Finland. Some are only acquaintances that I have met with on some occasions, others I have known already longer and have personal relations with. According to Letherby (2003), the practice of interview is often based on masculine assumptions, following positivist principles where the interviewer and the interviewee have specific roles they are to play. But the feminist approach to interviews accepts the non-hierarchical relationship as the best way to gain information about people's lives: when the researcher invests their personal identity, they are more likely to gain better access. This is why I believe that my personal connections to the interviewees actually helped to gain information.

I chose my interviewees on the criteria that they had to be or have been in a position of higher management in a company related to maritime in Finland. I have chosen not to go too deeply into the identifying characteristics of these women, such as positions and work places, as the field of maritime in Finland is small, women in it are few, and I have promised anonymity for my interviewees. I will use pseudonyms for them when discussing the findings, and the

pseudonyms will be presented in that chapter. In general, the women interviewed were around 40-50 years old. They all worked in positions that are comparable to higher management. Their expertise in the maritime sector varied from 30 years to around 8 years. The interviewees had a variety of educational backgrounds, from master mariners to lower and higher business education, law, and communications.

I conducted the interviews in September 2019. I initially approached the interviewees through email, in which I explained the setting and the overall theme of the interview. The interviews were set to take place mainly in the workplaces of these women, whilst one of the interviews took place in a café. In the beginning of the interview I explained the setting and that I aimed to maintain the anonymity of the interviewees. As stated earlier, the interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way, where I had my interview guide with initial questions, but if interesting avenues presented, I chose to pursue those leads. I also adapted my interview guide throughout the interviews as there were some interesting points brought up in the first interviews that I wanted to pursue in the later interviews. The interviews took between 50 minutes to 1 hour 25 minutes.

3.5 Analysis of results

I recorded all of my interviews and transcribed them word for word using oTranscribe. After I had my transcripts, I started the process of analysis. As with all research, the results don't magically just emerge from the data, but the researcher has to take an active role in the identification of patterns and themes. I carried out my analysis of data using the principles of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is according to Braun and Clarke (2006) a good starting point for beginners in qualitative analysis, as it is accessible, flexible and can be applied to many theoretical and epistemological approaches. Joffe (2012, p. 213) states that thematic analysis is best used to find out the "specific nature of a given group's conceptualisation of the phenomenon under study". With thematic analysis, the aim is to identify, analyse and report patterns in the data, and it is well used with analysing interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which is one reason I chose this particular analysis method.

In my thematic analysis, I, through coding, identified the themes that were present across the interview transcripts. According to Joffe (2012, p. 209), a theme “refers to a specific pattern of meaning found in the data”. These themes can be explicit or implicit, and both of these are used in thematic analysis. In my thematic analysis process, I will first acquainted myself with the dataset and then continued to develop my coding. Coding, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is already part of the analysis process, a way of organising the data to meaningful groups. The codes are basic segments of the data, that I will then sorted into themes, reviewed and defined into presentable results. I didn’t use any specific software for the coding, but rather did the coding and sorting of the themes manually using Excel.

Braun and Clarke (2006) identify two methods for thematic analysis, inductive (the “bottom up” way) and theoretical (the “top down” way). My analysis style was more inductive, as I aimed to analyze all the themes that rose from the interviews, not just the ones that fitted my initial framework. Some themes rose in the interviews, and I carried them over to the following interviews to see if those thoughts were corroborated by other interviewees. I felt that through this type of analysis I could be more open to the stories and experiences of these women, without trying to fit them into theoretical pre-assumptions.

3.6 Evaluation and concerns

As discussed earlier, it is difficult to assess qualitative research with traditional criteria that has been used for quantitative research. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) give alternative criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability to qualitative research. These are especially good according to them with regards to my constructivist ontological and epistemological points of view.

Credibility refers to whether there is enough familiarity with the topic and is there sufficient amount of data to back it up (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Braun and Clarke (2006) offer some issues that researchers can face during thematic analysis. These include for example failing to analyze the data, or doing it weakly and unconvincingly, or relating the interview questions as the themes to be identified. I aimed to try to avoid the mismatch of data and my actual claims and provide credibility: the claims have to be supported by the data.

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) state that transferability is establishing connections to previous research, not through replication but rather similarity. I aimed to link my research to other previous research, and this was highlighted in the literature review, but also in my discussion chapter. Dependability then creates the trustworthiness of the research: does the researcher offer logical, traceable and documented information to the reader (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). To make my research dependable, I recorded the research process for my final thesis. I kept a personal research journal throughout my writing and interview process, and also reported my analysis process in the final product. Proving conformability will be done through basically all of the following procedures; all the documentation of the research should prove the reader that the research is just not from my own imagination.

3.7 Ethical concerns

Even if combining a feminist approach to business research can be in many ways beneficial and produce new angles to the tradition, some things can also be left out in the research setting, since a multidimensional and multidisciplinary framework can be challenging. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) There are obviously some concerns that may have risen during my research, especially with regards to my choice of methodology and research philosophies that make me integrate myself into the research more deeply. I had personal connections with these interviewees, and even though it was important to connect with them in a personal level, I did find myself thinking if I can report some things. It has to be mentioned, that during the interviews these women did provide some situation or person-specific instances that I was asked not to report, and some personal things that were not relevant to be described in detail. I have chosen obviously not to include these issues as they were stated, but I have incorporated them in my analysis process as background information. I have also anonymized the datasets for the research, and they are stored in a secure way.

The interview situations were conducted by addressing ethical concerns: the interviewees were assured that all responses are confidential and that they are allowed to withdraw from the interview and not obligated to answer questions they did not want to. As personal experiences were important in this research, I sometimes found myself in the situation where

my interpretation and analysis reflected my own experiences. I also found myself in a situation, where I was thinking that I needed to fit the experiences of my interviewees into the box I had assigned, and that was affected of my own experiences. My task in this research is not to prove a point or a theory, but to bring up the experiences of these women and show what we can learn from them.

I have in this chapter presented my research methodology, my research methods and the interview settings for my empirical research. In the next chapter I will then present the findings of my interviews and discuss them based on my theoretical framework.

4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the previous chapters I have presented my theoretical framework and my research methodology, and reflecting on these I will now present my findings from the empirical research, the interviews of eight women in the maritime sector in Finland. In this chapter I will be using pseudonyms for my interviewees in order to protect their anonymity. My findings are structured as such: I will first delve more into the maritime sector itself, creating context in which these women are doing their leadership, describing the general leader role in the industry. Then I will discuss the gender role in maritime, reflecting on the experiences of my interviewees. The next section discusses how these women's experiences as leaders fit the leader role in the field, and how they portray agentic and communal leadership qualities.

4.1 Leader role in the maritime

First, I aimed to understand the world of leadership in the maritime sector. This will portray a picture of the leader role, which I will then reflect on based on the experiences of my interviewees to see how they see their own congruity to it. Three of the women, Meri, Tuuli and Aava had started their career studying the seafarer profession, and spent years working onboard ships, after which they were either offered professions at the office or circumstances made the life at shore more appealing. Three of the interviewees, Aila, Linda and Laura, who didn't have maritime education, had however worked most of their career in professions related to maritime. Two of the women, Aura and Mirva had first made longer careers in other fields, and only after that moved to maritime. This division of interviewees in my opinion gives a good insight to maritime from women with different kinds of connections to this particular field, with some of them having experienced the "outside world" also. I will build my picture of leadership in the maritime sector in Finland mainly through the practices on board ships, as those are bound to reflect and transfer to the office situations as even the office functions are mainly focused on the operation of the ship, at sea.

What defines the tradition of leadership in maritime, as discussed already in my first chapters, is the long tradition of operating ships. It is still a very old-fashioned culture, like my interviewee, Aura said: "the quarter of maritime is 25 years". The operation model of ships

has been created centuries ago; a model in which every member of the crew has their own area of expertise, but the main responsibility of it all lays on the shoulders of the captain. At sea, the operating circumstances have made life difficult, and the captain has often had to make decisions of life and death. Three of my interviewees, Meri, Tuuli and Aava had experience of working onboard a ship, and they had also educated themselves as master mariners. I will now portray a picture of leadership at sea, especially in the Finnish maritime sector, from their points of view. I will also incorporate views of my other interviewees on how they see the leadership at sea.

Leadership onboard is most often seen as the management of things and operations; winches and engines. There are clear tasks that need to be carried out, and everyone has clear responsibilities that need to be done, as no one else will do them. This portrays a picture of a world where agentic, task-focused leadership style is very much appreciated, and the leader role sounds very masculine. The position of the captain is also framed by the high responsibility and the high stakes. If something happens at sea, lives of the crew and passengers, and the environment are at stake. The situations at sea usually arise in a matter of seconds or minutes, and decision-making must be tough, fast and clear. Most often also it is not clear at that moment what the consequences actually are. As Meri said, *“it takes the court 10 years to decide if the decision that I had 10 seconds time to make was right”*. The captain’s situated decision-making can be reflected through the typology by (Grint, 2005), where differently situated problems are faced with different type of authority. In the case of critical problems, like those that might rise on board ships, the problem would be faced with commanding authority, aiming to handle the situation. Leaders should not however use these same commanding methods in situations where they are faced with less critical problems, where larger strategy thinking or people-management is needed, but they should move between the different modes of leadership and management.

The requirements of quick decision-making and task-focus don’t apply only to the captain: most often the people making the decisions are the officers that are on duty at the bridge, operating the ship. Linda pointed out that mainly none of the decisions made in the office

have this urgency, as in the office usually the decisions lay on the leadership-management-scale, with no need for commanding, as referred to the typology by Grint (2005). Making these decisions requires a certain type of a person that has accumulated the right mental models. This person can, through making these tough decisions, develop their ego, to what Meri called a “super-ego”. This means that these people’s trust in the own actions grows (and has to grow), and risk-taking becomes their second nature. This risk-taking also might bring feelings of rush and excitement, and the mind can start craving more of them.

My interviewees also said that people who have been working at sea know their worth, and one even described them as somewhat “primadonnas”. This worth usually comes from the fact that through experience, these seafarers are actually strong experts on their field and they bring valuable experience to the operation. As Aila said, there are not two hundred different ways in which to operate a ship, so the structures are quite rigid and defined by hierarchy and straight line of command. Seniority onboard has in the old times been valued and often led to straight promotions, despite the actual leadership style of the person. However, many pointed out also that they have seen a shift also in onboard management style, as the importance of people management has risen as the world of maritime has become more competitive. I have after the interviews learned of a leadership change project amongst the captains of Finnish shipowners, which aims to develop the leadership styles onboard. Like Aila noted:

“Even though ships are steel and cargoes are whatever, this business is still business between people.”

As said, onboard there can be a need for this style of super-ego fast management, but at shore it is understandable that these methods do not work. My interviewees had faced some of the remnants of these styles at the office also. In the field, there are in general big personalities in charge of the companies according to my informants. Many of the people working in the office jobs are with maritime background, but I was also told that those with no maritime experience come from various backgrounds of business, law and engineering. It would seem that this creates a mix of leadership styles also, which would make it difficult to create a clear

picture of the leader role in the maritime field. Based on my findings, I would however theorize (and somewhat stereotype) that the leader role in maritime, also in the office is seen as task-oriented, direct and agentic, which arises from the style on board, which is then mitigated by the office environment and the mix of various backgrounds. Also, there are indications based on the views of my interviewees that the leader role, especially that of the captain, at sea is slowly being changed to focus more on the communal side.

4.2 Gender role in the maritime

One important building block in role congruity theory and in my theoretical framework is the gender role, thus it was important to see how the gender role had been built in the maritime sector. Especially interesting were the histories of the women that had been working at sea, but I also wanted to understand how the women who had come from “outside”, saw the position of a woman, and especially that of a female leader in this particular field. All these experiences portray a picture of the gender role in the maritime field, which can be then compared to the general gender role of a woman and how big of an incongruity there is between that and the leader role.

4.2.1 Gender role on board ships

I will first discuss the experiences on board through the lense of my interviewees. Meri, Tuuli and Aava had an education and working history from sea, but had been working on shore already for over a decade. These women had fairly similar careers, going to maritime education and training periods in the end of 1980’s and beginning of 1990’s. From there they had risen to positions of officers on board. I will describe here some of their experiences as being a woman on board a ship as in my opinion it portrays a good picture of the gender role in maritime, and also of their personal growth.

For these women, being on a ship in the 1990’s was not from the outset easy. There were only few women onboard, and the atmosphere was not always welcoming. But like Tuuli expressed her feelings at that time:

“When I was younger... many times I thought that since I am here and I have put myself into this field, I just have to deal with all this shit.”

My interviewees countered stories of prejudice, created by the actions of some individual woman before them. In one of the stories told to me, a woman had gone to pick flowers during her shift; in the other, a woman had in the beginning of her tour picked up an officer, and thus been able to avoid all of her duties. These instances of individual women had in a way destroyed the image of the entire gender, framing them as incompetent and untrustworthy. These instances had led to prejudice from the part of their male co-workers against my interviewees, even though they had in no matter been related to these women who had “behaved badly”. These experiences had created a stereotypical view of women, and thus my interviewees that had been working onboard had made sure that they would be keeping their head down, doing their work as well as they good (or even better) and keeping away from alcohol and men, essentially trying to avoid fitting the stereotype or increasing it. As Aava said, even if the male co-workers could for example sleep late, as a woman she felt that she had no possibility to do this and keep her reputation.

“Some of the men sleep late, for me, I couldn’t even think about it, no way, [had to think] the reputation, so that I don’t get the reputation that “girls only lazy around”

However, once these women had proven their worth and shown that they can be relied on, they really had earned the respect of the other sea-farers onboard. Meri described how women might be left for example to carry heavy things by themselves:

“The first weeks they look how you manage, and then when they see you’re doing your work, they will come and say that actually no one works alone here.”

But after those initial obstacles, Meri mentioned that there could be even positive discrimination, that the men would take care of the women, bringing coffee to the table and such. This is an interesting point, as this could be related very much to traditional gender roles, but from the men adhering to their roles, where men feel they need to protect and treat the women nicely.

4.2.2 Proving your worth

It would seem that men have to go through a similar kind of process proving their worth, but these women felt that it was in a way more severe for the women. After proving your worth, it was not important what gender you were, just as long as you were doing your job properly. Clear information about person's capabilities is one of the mitigating factors of gender bias (Koch et al 2015). This thought was one of the main findings in my thesis, that in the field of maritime, your expertise is valued over everything else: once you have proven yourself, you are deemed worthy. At least onboard this can be linked back to the fact that in a closed workplace, where everyone has clear duties, it becomes easily clear if someone is not pulling their worth. In this environment, expertise and hard work are respected, and these are also the defining points for individuals.

I define the field of maritime to be somewhat of a meritocracy, where people are valued and rewarded according to their merit or value (Castilla & Benard, 2010). Based on the stories I was told, the road for a woman in the maritime field, in office and at sea, is one filled with more and different obstacles than that of a man, but once they reach the point of proving their worth, they are respected. After that, there is no matter what gender you are or what background you have. This is interesting in the eyes of the research on paradox of meritocracy, where organisations that aim for a meritocracy through operational measures actually ends up favouring men (Castilla & Benard, 2010). However, compared to measures aiming for meritocracy that may seem superimposed, in maritime the ideas for merit-based valuation are integrated into the people. However it was also noted by these women that proving your worth shouldn't be so difficult for women.

The women that didn't have maritime training, but had worked in maritime for most of their careers, felt also that they had had to prove themselves worthy by doing their job properly and gaining the respect. (Obviously this was not an issue for these women, as they took working hard and learning the ropes for granted.) Like Aila mentioned, in the beginning of her career she had felt that she needed to learn everything about everything. Those feelings

had started to diminish once she had gained more experience, but also once she had acknowledged that no one actually knew everything:

“Through experience I have gained knowledge and courage and also trust in knowing that you know things, but also knowing that you don’t also know everything.”

This is a strategy in which women usually might aim to fight the stereotypical assumptions: once they know everything, they should be worthy. In addition to feeling that they needed to know everything, when asked for top management positions, some had felt very stereotypically that they might not be able to perform in the position:

“When I was asked for that position, of course the first female thought was that I can’t do this and I don’t know enough. And in the beginning there was this slight panicky feeling that you wanted to know everything and control everything.”

These women also respected the maritime experience their colleagues had:

I have to say that....it raises respect when (at work) there’s a guy that has started as a deck hand and risen up from there, so you respect the hands-on experience that you don’t have yourself.”

4.2.3 Sexism in maritime

None of my interviewees had faced many straight on assumptions about their position or knowledge, as the cases had been mostly individual instances of individual men. There had been cases of traditional assumptions in which the women had been mistaken for the secretary, or that they know nothing about cars or football. These women didn’t feel much affected by these instances, and had usually good coping mechanisms, as this following quote from Aila proves:

“I was at this company party, all dressed up and at some point of the evening I was discussing with a man that I didn’t know from before, he was some leader in some

shipping company, and when I introduced myself he asked whose avec I was. ... I just asked him whose avec he was.”

Assumptions about the gender roles can portray themselves also in cases of chauvinism and misogyny, even in the form of sexual harassment, and make it more difficult for women to work on those fields. The instances of clear chauvinism or facing assumptions about themselves seemed to be few and rare. Laura described her previous boss who had felt that she and her colleagues had just been “girlies doing girly things”, and not recognised them as professionals. We also discussed the me too-initiative with my interviewees. Meri, Tuuli and Aava noted some experiences from their sea days of instances of sexual harassment, but stated that these were isolated incidents and that in general they had been treated well on board and the attitudes of the men had been even protective. Some pointed out the changes in attitudes after the me too-campaign, stating that perhaps men now feel that this kind of a behaviour is not accepted. Earlier in their careers raunchy discussions had been somewhat more prevalent, like Aura reminisced:

“There was this one older gentleman that was very nice when sober, but after a few drinks wanted to hug and kiss all the ladies. You just had to dodge him ... and say no thank you, not this time.”

Women had gathered coping mechanisms for these situations, stating that they aimed to change the subject, and state nicely but firmly and clearly that they did not approve of this type of discussion. Related to this, many women said that the evening events in the field had also “sobered up”, and that long shipping lunches and wild evenings seemed to have been left in the past. If events did move to the bar, many women said that they at that point were calling the evening.

“The culture can’t be built on leaning to the bar together, not remembering the day after what was that important thing discussed last night.”

This would point to the direction that even though there might be inherent ideas about women in the maritime not being able to handle sea farer positions, and clear positions for women in

the office outside top management positions (Unctad, 2018), there is no inherent sexism in the industry in Finland (the situation most likely is different in other countries not discussed in this research). It would seem there are factors, perhaps arising from the meritocracy, mitigating the effect of gender role in professionals. An interesting comparison can be made to another male-dominated field, that of gaming. Video game industry is very male-dominated, and the attitudes towards women are clearly sexist (Johnson, 2013), embracing hegemonic and techno-masculinity. Women face harassment and threats on their life when taking part in the discussion of the misogyny of the field (Headstuff, 2019). There doesn't seem to be similar type of misogyny in maritime in Finland, highlighting the fact that even two male-dominated fields can have different sort of attitudes towards women.

4.2.4 Being a woman, and other women

Gender didn't seem like a big issue for most of my interviewees. Tuuli even stated how she never thinks about it and feels that if she was playing the gender card, the men would just get annoyed as they don't go with being a man first and foremost. However, in general they seemed to have a positive attitude towards empowering women in male-dominated fields and acknowledging the obstacles that women may face more compared to men. Meri stated that she felt bad that she hadn't been more of a women's rights advocate during her career at sea, but also acknowledged how the times really had been different back in the 90's, and the time to be able to speak out had only come later.

How does being a woman on this field feel like then? Mainly my interviewees had felt positive emotions about this. As Linda said, it's just positive, easy and nice to work with men on this field. She felt that compared to other fields the communication was more direct, and that this was a good thing. Many acknowledged the fact that in a male-dominated field, it is easy to stand out in a good way. Being one of the few women in an event with two hundred men dressed as "penguins" makes it easier to be remembered and approached. Aura also mentioned that through hiring her, as a woman, to her position had been a somewhat conscious move to show progress in the organization.

In a male-dominated field, it is not just men that might have expectations for other women, but relationships with other women might end up hindering women's careers. Women that are not strongly gender identified may actually show favoritism towards men in male-dominated fields (Kaiser & Spalding, 2015). A certain type of behaviour of women in male-dominated fields has been named as the "queen bee" phenomenon where women distance themselves physically and psychologically from other women whilst presenting themselves more in a masculine way and endorsing the hierarchical gender structure (Derks et al., 2016). The roots of the behavior are in women's need for assimilation and the negative stereotypes they face in the male-dominated organisations. In these situations the women do not wish to "rock the boat" and challenge the current biased situation, but rather resort to coping mechanisms that help them to maintain their own position. This kind of behaviour was brought up by Laura; in her experiences there had been some feeling of competition from other women in the field, a need to show that they are somehow better. Aura wondered if this behaviour that she had also encountered was due to the insecurities of these women.

On the other hand, these women emphasised also the importance of networking amongst women and having positive female role models. Some said that at times it was nice to talk with other women also. Having positive female role models can be a positive influence for women in diminishing the threat of stereotypes (Smart Richman et al, 2011). Mirva also noted that in her organisation her female employees had portrayed pride in having a female CEO. Aava also mentioned that the women in the field all seem to be somehow with spunk and strength, ordinary Finnish women. These experiences make me also wonder whether there is a certain type of women that actually ends up working in maritime, that perhaps the women with the strength and spunk are the ones that are left working there and especially rising to leadership positions.

4.2.5 Parenthood

One important gender role is that of a mother. The statistics I presented in the literature review showed that the amount of women in ship professions diminished when the age of starting a family was reached. The role of family and that of a mother are often raised in

discussions regarding working mothers. Work-family conflict may be a reason for women to leave certain professions, and in masculine work cultures work-family stress may even be amplified (Singh et al 2018). Most of my interviewees had children, some younger, some already grown-ups. My interviewees had faced some prejudice, mainly abroad, on how the role of a manager and that of a mother could work together. However, the consensus amongst these women seemed to be that they didn't feel that they had needed to sacrifice anything in order to raise a family. The sentiment seemed to be that these women that had children were first and foremost mothers, and that they would have had children even though that would have hindered their careers. Sometimes they might feel bad if times at work would be busy. Like Tuuli stated:

“First and foremost I am a mother, and after that all else. My priorities in that way are clear. If my children have an emergency, work can always wait for that while, and I never have had to question this.”

Of course it had required some organizing, for example less evening events. Most mentioned the support of their husbands, describing them as “good and “modern”, men that can cook, allowing the women to pursue their careers and that without these husbands it would have not been possible. It would seem that even if due to practical reasons combining a sea farer profession and being a mother might prove to be difficult, in the office positions the mother role does not seem to be amplifying the gender role and causing perceived incongruence.

4.2.6 Appearances

One important aspect of gender role is women's appearances. Especially in a male-dominated field, femininity can become more salient, and for example feminine dress might increase this salience (Eagly & Karau, 2002). My findings could be summed up to the fact that appearances don't seem to matter in maritime in Finland, in the office, not for women or for men. The story however was different when the women related their experiences from onboard ships, where there was no possibility to show signs of femininity, which is somewhat congruent with findings of Kitada (2013). This however, didn't seem to reflect to the office, where basically all stated that it was alright for men and women to walk around in their wool

socks. Of course, the basic codes of business attire were respected at the workplace, but there was no pressure to “look the part” of a leader.

Mirva did however bring up the general stereotypical demands that leaders, both men and women, have been facing the past years. Media has been portraying these images of what she called “greyhound-type” leaders who wake up at 5 am, eat organic oatmeal and run a marathon just before the work day starts. These demands of the new perfect leader are in stark contrast to the olden days stereotypical boss, sitting in the leather chair, drinking scotch and smoking a cigar, with the waistcoat stretching over his round belly. She felt that these new “standards” for leaders were anxiety-inducing.

The women emphasized the fact that no one’s worth is related to what they wear, and that no judgement should be made based on appearances. Once again, the importance of expertise was seen to weigh in more. Some also stated that with age, one had come more to terms with their changing appearances, and how it is not related to anything they are doing in the working life. These thoughts and the lack of pressure to look certain way can be seen as healthy signs that support the idea of meritocratic business life in the field of maritime.

4.3 Leadership role and my interviewees

In this chapter, I will discuss the leader role more from the perspective of these women, reflecting it on the industry requirements and the stereotypical leader role. Several themes rose as the interviewees were discussing their own leadership qualities, as well as the leadership qualities they admired. Most of the qualities are what could be described as “feminine”, but the interviewees also emphasized the importance of making sure that things are actually done and well, which can be described to be more in the agentic, masculine leadership style. This blend of leadership styles can be described as androgynous, a style that has become more prominent in the last years (Kark et al, 2012). This change to more androgynous leadership stereotype would also diminish the incongruity between the leader and the gender role for women, and could be a good style to adopt in order to reach effectiveness. I will discuss on where this mix of leadership styles has risen from, is it

inherent to these women or have they have to modify their styles in order to fit their gender and leader roles.

4.3.1 Being a human to another human – the communal side

The most important theme that I identified from the discussions was what I describe in the words of one of the interviewees as “being a human to another human”. With this, I refer to the people-aspect of leadership, which all of my interviewees brought up in a way or another as being important. This style of leadership adopts many feminine, communal features, like being empathic, showing compassion, and clear communication. This finding seemed not to concur with some of the research in which successful women in male-dominated fields were seen as hostile and cold (Heilman, 2012). As stated by the role congruity theory, showing communal leadership style can cause an incongruity, as the leader role is seen as agentic (like it seems to be the case in maritime). It was thus interesting to see that these women had strong emphasis on the communal side, even though theoretically this could be seen unbeneficial for them. Obviously, I was not observing these women at their work and didn’t discuss with their employees, so that I cannot verify if their actual styles comply with their ideology.

The importance of actually knowing the employees was emphasized many times in the interviews: it was seen as an advantage that they were able to lead the people in a personal level. This relationship leadership is of course a very much communal style of leadership, and connected to the feminine leadership style. It seemed important that the leader is accessible, and not just sitting in the corner office behind closed doors. Like Laura portrayed her leadership:

“I have that advantage that I know everyone, so I can lead things and people in a fairly personal level; thinking how a person or a team works and then adapting accordingly the practices and demands.”

Reflecting on the context of the maritime field, the importance of leading specialists, experts on their field is something that influences the leadership. As Meri, a manager in charge of company’s operational side, emphasized, it is important that the leader does not take away

the responsibility of their direct employees. Her situation was one of where the problems easily rose to her level, passing the actual “chain of command”. Empowering their employees and humanizing them was important for these women.

The role of honesty and directness in communication was also emphasized: many felt that it is important to be honest to their employees in matters relating to the business or their positions, and also that most often it is also crucial to speak directly even about difficult matters. Also, in discussing difficult matters, there was the importance of argumentation in reasoning what the reasons behind decisions were.

We also discussed the role of emotions at the workplace, as women are often seen stereotypically more prone to emotions, and also discussing them (Brescoll, 2016). Many expressed the importance of emotions in leadership and at the workplace. One of the women even stated how awful it would be a cold, emotionless robot.

“I always think how my decisions will affect the people. We have to think about it because at us the people are the most important thing, not any machines or equipment. “

Even if the role of emotions was recognized, many of the interviewees also remembered to mention that in big decisions there was no room for impulsiveness and that facts are the ones that matter. Also, Aava noted that in the basic operation of a ship there is no room or need for emotions, as the job is defined by routines and protocols. It is not possible to say “*oh look, there’s a cute red ship, perhaps I’ll let them pass us*”. Also, in crisis situations there is no room for feeling, as you have to be more executing. However, they also mentioned that when leading the crew, it’s another story as you are in interaction with humans.

Probably the most important advantage on being a woman was recognized by many was that they felt that it was easier for people to come and tell them about their feelings and problems. This could be due to the feminine gender stereotype of women as nurturing and caring, the mother type. Women in general also more often offer emotional support (Liebler & Sandefur, 2002), and if women fail to portray this interpersonal fairness, they may be seen to be in

violation of the perceptions (Heilman, 2012). This experience was present both at shore as on board.

“You could see that some of them had a desperate need to talk about their issues. They would come to the bridge during my watch and make a mountain of a mole hill, and I would ask them if they had time for a cup of coffee and usually they had something they wanted to discuss with me.”

This female presence in a male-dominated workplace was described as a balancing feature to the atmosphere. Female leadership has been discovered to actually create a more inclusive work place (Hoobler et al, 2018). It can be difficult for men to discuss their feelings and issues with other men, so the rare women are seen stereotypically being more open to listening, even if not all women possess these qualities. Some of the interviewees mentioned that at some points it can get somewhat tiring also, being the one for whom people come with their problems, but in general they saw that it was important for a leader to be easily approachable and being able to help their employees. However, there was a downside also to being available, as matters might this way accumulate easier to these women, to a higher level than they actually belong to. Related to being available for emotional discussions, women could be penalized if they are not filling their warm, communal role as being approachable (Brescoll, 2016). This might lead to situations where women have to be emotionally available even if they are not such persons or even if it is tiresome.

Being available was related also to the importance of communication that rose being important to my interviewees. Interestingly, there seemed to be a correlation between seeing women as more adapt communicators and them actually emphasizing the need of communication. Many had faced situations of bad communication with their own leaders and in their organizations, and thus had chosen to lead communication in their own position in a more open way. Like Aila noted on the role of a leader and their communication in difficult situations:

“You have to be very honest in what you say, it has to be true. ... In good leadership communication is extremely important, that you tell what you can, and do it in a humane way, no powerpoints.”

Laura stated that she didn't want to keep all the information to themselves, like her predecessor had done. The importance of feedback was also recognized: both receiving it and giving it to the organization. Laura told how through new ownership she had started to receive actual feedback from the owners. Mirva had established a clear schedule for discussions at least once a month with her employees.

For many of the interviewees this communal style of leadership seemed a fairly natural style, but for example Meri told how she had worked on her people skills. Her natural style was to focus on tasks, but had acknowledged the importance in her career. My impression was that for these women the importance of relationship leadership was more emphasized due to the changing leadership style requirements in business rather than the need to portray feminine style to diminish the incongruity. This would imply that even though there is incongruence between this communal style and the leader role in maritime, these women didn't feel like they had to change their style due to the gender incongruity but rather the incongruity between their style and the new preferred leadership style in business.

4.3.2 Doing leadership – the agentic side

Even though the communal side was very important for these women, they also emphasized at the same time the importance of the more agentic, task-oriented role of a leader. I call this theme “doing leadership”. This includes factors such as clear decision-making, clarity of doing and the importance of doing the job well. Even though these women emphasized the importance of the human interaction in their leadership, they also acknowledged that the job has to get done too. In a way, the communal side could be seen as the extra layer to this more agentic side of doing leadership. In the following paragraphs I will discuss their views on doing leadership.

Many of the interviewees mentioned the importance of good and clear decision-making in their description of their own or their view on good leadership. Laura mentioned how in the beginning of her managerial position, she had had to come to terms with the fact that she was now the one that had to make the decisions. There was no one else for whom to delegate the task, and there was no possibility to say that this issue did not belong on their table. It was also important for her that she leaves an image of a person capable of making clear decisions, not just saying “yeah, yeah”. This coming to terms with decision-making would imply that for a woman this might not come naturally.

Aava described how her time on board had given her the ability to actually make decisions. She related this to the fact that in the maritime school people are taught to carry their responsibility and clearly state their decisions that are usually made on the best possible knowledge at that time. There is no need to pass the blame or find excuses, as you always have to carry responsibility, not just for your own actions but of those that those under you have made, as onboard, the captain is always responsible for all the actions made. But like Meri reflected on her experiences on board, the fast decision-making done on ships should not be executed in the office. With the term fast leadership, she referred to the need to act instantly on a problem, or not use enough time to investigate the issue.

“When you face a problem, and it’s unclear or you see that you’re not told everything, don’t resort to fast leadership, for it doesn’t work. Listen, clarify, but don’t go with emotion. ... Turning into solution right away doesn’t work.”

Many emphasized the need of expressing clarity in decision-making and all together leadership. The leader should make their intentions clear for the employees and set clear targets to reach. Like Meri said, there should be no hidden agendas in your leadership, and that everyone should understand that. The interviewees felt they had been able to create such an atmosphere, where through clear intentions, they could make the organization perform well, or like Mirva referred to a comment she had received from her organization:

“[regarding her style]: When she says to her organization that now we jump, they all jump and they know why they are jumping.”

There is obviously amongst these women a clear congruence with their style of leadership and that of leadership on board ships. They understand the importance of task delivery, clear decision-making and carrying the responsibility, which were all important factors in the industry specific leadership role I described in the beginning of this chapter. As with the communal style, it was my impression that these more agentic features were quite natural for these women, but that the context emphasised the importance of task-orientation. This would imply that the leader role in the industry did influence the leadership style of these women, but perhaps not through the gender aspect, but rather through expectations.

I have now presented the findings from my empirical research that portray a picture of the leader role in the maritime in Finland, the gender role in maritime at shore and on board and the leadership roles that my interviewees possess. In the following chapter, I will conclude my findings and also discuss the possible practical implications as well as avenues for future research.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In the previous chapters I have presented my theoretical framework, the study setting and the results from the interviews. In this chapter I will provide the discussion on the main findings of my research, discuss practical implications and limitations of this study. I will also present avenues for possible future research.

5.1 Main findings

In my literature review I built my framework from the role congruity theory by Eagly and Karau (2002). In this framework, the incongruity between the gender role and the leader role caused women to face obstacles in being recognized as a leader and being respected as a leader. These prejudices are mitigated by things related to the context and the persons in the situation. The existence of a male-dominated field, which in this case was the maritime field, brings its own spin to the perceived gender and leader roles.

In my empirical research, I interviewed eight women in the field of maritime in Finland. These women were in leadership positions in jobs at the office. They related their experiences on being a woman in the maritime field and being a leader in the maritime field. In my results and discussion, I built a picture of leadership in the maritime field, its roots in the leadership onboard ships: leadership of high responsibility, commanding leadership, leadership of things. This portrayed a fairly agentic, masculine picture of leadership onboard. However, there was indication that the times are changing there also, and the importance of leading people has been recognized. This would indicate that the mitigating factors are in effect for the leader role, meaning that there would be more need for communal or androgynous leadership qualities, and based on the role congruity theory women would then fit the leadership roles better. What could be theorized from my results is that in maritime there is a clear demand even amongst men for a more communal leadership, as the women had many times faced situations where men had come to talk to them about personal issues.

As stated before, the leader role onboard ships is very much agentic and masculine, even though there are indications of change. These demands of the leadership onboard don't seem to have transferred to the office, although there was stories of how people who had been

working onboard were more hierarchical and knowing their value in office jobs also. The women I interviewed seemed to have adopted both the agentic and communal leadership values. They emphasized the importance of relationship leadership, but at the same time reminded that it is important that the job gets done. There was some indication with regards to some of the interviewees that they had in fact changed their leadership styles to incorporate things from both the agentic and communal roles, but for me it seemed more that the women realized the importance of a leadership incorporating the both, rather than that they would be changing their style to fit the leader role.

There is however a clear severity in the difference between the gender role in maritime and that of a woman. Work on ships has been seen as work of men, as it has been tough and demanding, and women have faced the need to prove their worth in positions on board. But even that is changing as the environment becomes less demanding with automation and digitalization. It would seem that the gender role is thus changing onboard also, which would then reflect to positions at the office also. More women would be entering maritime professions, at the same time creating a more appealing environment for other women.

The women that I interviewed seemed to have no difficulties in fitting the gender role in the office jobs: they were mothers, they felt they could be as feminine as they wanted, and sexism and sexual harassment was limited to individual instances according to these women. Onboard however there seemed to be unwritten limitations on how women could dress and behave, indicating the need of gender management described by (Kitada, 2012). Women who had been working onboard and then transferred to shore, even stated that it was nice to dress up now. This would indicate that the gender roles in the office jobs were not as strict in these measures. However, there seemed to be somewhat of a segregation on what women's jobs were and what men's jobs were: women had more of back office jobs, whilst men are in top management and technical positions (Unctad, 2018).

These women also felt that it was relatively easy and nice being a woman in maritime. They felt that their gender hadn't created much opposition. It could however be theorized that the women that had reached the top positions in this field are probably the ones for whom it has

been easy to succeed; so perhaps the ones that had faced more opposition and difficulties had not been able to reach the top. The women also felt that there were instances when being a woman was actually helpful, as they were easily identifiable from the crowd, especially in networking situations.

I could conclude that in maritime, women do face obstacles and prejudice in their career paths. These in my opinion relate very much to the masculine gender role that is prevalent in the industry. However, through my limited sample, I could say that even though through this masculine gender role the leader role is very much agentic, these women didn't seem to have faced larger judgment in their leadership positions or that they would have felt the need to change because of the agentic expectations. These women had found the right leadership styles for themselves, and stuck to them. Once they had reached positions where they had proven their worth, they were respected. There was a clear air of meritocracy in the maritime field, where everyone had to prove their worth, and once they had done that they were respected despite gender.

5.2 Practical implications

I hope this study would highlight some of the negative experiences these women have had to go through whilst being employed in the maritime sector in Finland. There are still existing stereotypes and obstacles for women in the field that they have to overcome in order to be successful, and there is a need to still address those in order to create equal opportunities for both genders. There should not be unnecessary obstacles for women in maritime, obstacles that are only related to their gender instead of their actual capabilities. But rather I would like this study to highlight the importance of women in a male-dominated field, and that there are no reasons to not hire more women into top leadership positions. Women can bring diversity and different experiences to male-dominated fields, and this can help to create a better workplace. Everyone has to prove their worth in work situations, but those tests should not be such that they defer people from those positions. Companies should really think how their organizational culture might be taking part into procedures that enhance the masculine view of maritime professions and especially leadership positions in the maritime.

In addition, I want this study to be an inspiration for those women that think about entering the maritime field. There can be a certain air of mystery around shipping, but this study proves that the opportunities there are plenty even for women. The women currently working in maritime offer great role models for those only now wondering about the obstacles and prejudice they might face in maritime. There are great possibilities in maritime for women, and they should be seized without fear of back lash. Adopting an androgynous leadership style that combines agentic and communal characteristics might be a successful strategy for women in this industry, as this style would mitigate both the prejudices faced based on the leader and the gender role.

5.3 Limitations of the study

This study was just a snapshot of the experiences that some women have in the maritime sector in Finland. As this study was made in Finland, it could be assumed that the cultural context of non-hierarchical leadership and equality here will reflect to the experiences these women had. Thus, these results can't be generalized into theoretical implications. However, these results portray a snapshot of the industry, and the practices there and it should not be assumed that they are not valid conclusions. It has to be noted that the sample for this research was small, only providing a small amount of opinions, thus making the generalizability of the findings limited. Also, all the interviewees were women, and thus providing their own interpretations of the overall leadership style of maritime, and this view can be for this reason incomplete or even biased.

Even though I have described the leadership styles of these women, all these are self-reflections and I had no possibility to see how these leadership styles are in action. There can be differences in self- and other-reflections; you might feel like you are doing something in a certain manner, but in truth it is not so. This does not however limit the validity of these results, as subjective views are also valid interpretations of the existing situations and portray a picture on how these women feel these issues. Using interview data can also create a bias of social desirability in the responses, meaning that the interviewees perhaps wanted to paint a nicer picture of the field and their experiences and thus their reporting was limited.

5.4 Future research

This research brought about many ideas for future research. Obviously, it would be interesting to see what the experiences of women in shipping are in the world. Finland, like stated before, is a country of non-hierarchical leadership values and greater equality between men and women. But this is not the case in all the countries, especially those that are bigger in shipping, such as Philippines. In some countries for women there is no access even to maritime schools, which causes their maritime careers to end before they even started. There are a lot of successful women in Wista from for example Ghana, and it would be interesting to compare their stories to those of Finnish women.

In order to create more theoretical implications, one possible avenue would be to conduct a quantitative survey study amongst the members of Wista all around the world. This study could look into the leadership styles of these women and how they ended up in maritime and what kind of obstacles they have had to face in their career paths. Another interesting avenue for research would be to study the thoughts of men in the field of maritime, how do they feel about women in leadership, and onboard and perhaps see if the men recognize prejudice in their ideas or has the field been able to change their attitudes in the past years. The changing times also lead to interesting opportunities to see in a couple of years, if the changing leadership styles will change the field of maritime and make it more equal.

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